LAUREATES OF IMPERIALISM

Big Business Re-Writes American History

By HERBERT APTHEKER

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I. BIG BUSINESS RE-WRITES AMERICAN HISTORY

A. The Background

A New England carpenter—and early trade-union leader—Seth Luther, said to his fellow-workers in 1832:

> Our ears are constantly filled with the cry of National wealth, National glory, American system and American industry. . . . This cry is kept up by men who are endeavoring by all the means in their power to cut down the wages of our people. . . . The whole concern (as now conducted) is as great a humbug as ever deceived any people. We see the system of manufacturing lauded to the skies; senators, representatives, owners . . . using all means to keep out of sight the evils growing up under it.[1]

Capitalism, based upon exploitation, requires glamorization. As the system ages and rots, the more colossal become the buttressing falsehoods.

By the '90's, with the appearance of monopoly capital-

ism, the first magazine devoted to "business"—and called *Business*—appeared. Its editor opened with this battle-cry: "Business runs the world. The world gets civilized just as fast as men learn to run things on plain business principles. . . . We shall yet have masterly biographies of the men of affairs."

Said one of these "men of affairs," the steel baron, Andrew Carnegie, in 1899: "We accept and welcome, as conditions to which we must accommodate ourselves, great inequality of environment, the concentration of business, industrial and commercial, in the hands of a few, and the law of competition between these, as being not only beneficial, but essential for the future of the race."[2]

So: business civilized, and Big Business guarded Man's future. It remained only to sanctify it, and as the twentieth century dawned, William Lawrence, Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Massachusetts and a member of the Harvard Corporation, performed the rites: ". . . it is only to the man of morality that wealth comes. . . . Godliness is in league with riches. . . . Material prosperity is helping to make the national character sweeter, more joyous, more unselfish, more Christlike."[3]

Though Big Business, then, was accepted, commended and declared sacred, "the evils growing up under it" continued to appear and even multiply, wherefore the process of laudation continued and even intensified. In American capitalism's cocky Coolidge days, when Ford "vanquished" Marx, one read that the "job of administering this planet must be turned over to the despised business man. . . . There is no country in the world so efficiently governed as the American Telephone & Telegraph Co. or the Gen-

eral Electric Co. Business has become the world's greatest benefactor."[4]

Today, General Motors—and its aide-de-camp, General Eisenhower—having (again!) "annihilated" Marx, the same cacophony assails the ears. Now, in tune with the times, an hysterical quality pervades the discordant sounds. The Du Pont corporation, in its own sumptuously bound "history"—authored and printed by itself, but distributed by Scribner's—finds that the "American" economy has not so much defeated Marx as "absorbed" him, thus making the conquest final: "A century ago, Karl Marx dreamed and wrote of a Utopia where the people would own the tools of production and share in their output. His dream has come true, not in the Communist state founded on the theories he propounded so ardently, but in Capitalistic America."[5]

From all sides comes the flood of words. The editors of *Life* magazine, like the Du Pont Corporation (happy coincidence!), devote an entire issue (Jan. 3, 1953) to "The American and His Economy," its theme being: "We are moving, not towards Socialism, but past Socialism. . . . Our system is adapted, not to the past, but to the present and future."* The call has gone out for a "new" literature, too. John Chamberlain finds the leading American novelists of the past—Jack London, Sherwood Anderson, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis—singularly imperceptive writers who absurdly depicted the businessman "as a villainous creature." The time has come, rings Chamberlain's brave call, for "a pathfinder," for "a novelist [who] will go

* See the refutation, *"Life's* Dream Picture" by Henry T. Goodwin, in *Political Affairs,* Feb. 1953.

forth into the marketplace and use his eyes," unlike the above-named cliché-peddlers.[6]

Francis Ferguson, Professor of English at Rutgers University, speaks on "Drama and the Industrial Manager" at a College English Association Institute devoted to "Industry and the Liberal Arts" and held in October, 1953, on the premises of the Corning Glass Works in up-state New York. He tells his audience—businessmen and college teachers—of the glories of "that new figure in the contemporary scene, the 'statesman of industry' " and says that in the genius of that figure lies the salvation of the American theatre.[7]

What is called "Public Relations" has itself become Big Business. Its business is to glorify Big Business. Characteristic is the talk, "How Business Can Sell the American Way of Life to the American People" delivered by the "Public Relations" tycoon, Edward L. Bernays, at a Conference of Businessmen and Educators, held in October, 1950.

As *Fortune* magazine editorialized (September, 1950):

> The free enterprise campaign is shaping up as one of the most intensive sales jobs in the history of industry. In fact, it is becoming very much an industry in itself. This year it will probably account for at least one hundred million dollars worth of industry's ad budget [income-tax deductible—H.A.] and an unknown but hefty share of its employee relationships expenditure [likewise—H.A.]. More to the point, it is absorbing more and more of the energy expended by top men in U.S. management.

"The great need," says Dale Cox of International Harvester, "is telling the over-all institutional story of the

American system." Says Claude A. Putnam, President of the National Association of Manufacturers, with becoming warmth: "Today's challenge, today's dire necessity is to sell, to resell, if you will—to free Americans the philosophy that has kept us and our economy free."[8]

Strikingly reflective of the impact of this campaign and itself a potent instrument of the campaign is the recent conversion of David E. Lilienthal from a New Deal outlook to one which finds that:

> . . . in Big Business we have more than an efficient way to produce and distribute basic commodities, and to strengthen the nation's security; we have a social institution that promotes human freedom and individualism . . . Big Business is basic to the very life of this country. . . .[10]

The iteration and re-iteration, *ad nauseam,* of this line —that Big Business is the body and soul of America, its protector, developer and guarantor—springs from Wall Street's knowledge that the people in the vast majority are highly suspicious of the virtues of their savior. A nakedly Big Business Administration seeks a nakedly Big Business ideology. To wipe out the legal, political and social impact of the New Deal means to root out the ideology of the New Deal.

The monopolists remember well the collapse of 1929, and the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. They remember, very well indeed, the development, in the thirties, of militant mass organizations of the working class—employed and unemployed—the farmers, the Negro people, professionals and small businessmen, the battles

they waged, the successes won, which together the people know as the New Deal.

The masses rallied to "drive the money changers out of the Temple." The investigations during the New Deal era of some of the "patriotic" activities of those money-changers—of the utilities, banks, munitions makers, of monopoly as a whole (in the TNEC reports, etc.) began to open the eyes of millions of Americans to the parasitic, destructive, corrupt, and anti-democratic nature of Big Business.

Big Business seeks to make the New Deal synonymous with treason. Columnist John O'Donnell, of the McCormick-Patterson chain of newspapers (to whom, in Hitler's name, F.D.R. awarded the Nazi Iron Cross) hails the Brownell-Eisenhower smear of the New Deal in the slanders against Harry Dexter White and in the attack upon Truman's loyalty. "This," he writes, "exposes the Communist conspiracy of the Roosevelt-Truman era to overthrow the Government of the United States."

The monopolists seek the acceptance of Big Business ideology, in face of the impending economic crisis, the better to push forward the Big Business program of fascism at home and imperialist war abroad.

The mass suspicion and fundamental hostility to Big Business haunts its servitors and the specter hovers about their most arrogant declamations. David Lilienthal himself, the modernized, Big-Business Lilienthal, explicitly says that his aim is to dispel this specter. "Most Americans," he laments, "have a deep seated fear and an emotional repugnance to Big Business . . . a degree of cynical distrust of *all* business." He concludes: "We think nega-

tively . . . We seem to be split personalities." [11]

Benjamin Fairless, president of the U.S. Steel Corporation, regularly denounces what he calls the "Calamity Johns" who attack Big Business. He analyzes such people in Lilienthal's terms: "They are people who are only suffering from what I would call a 'midget complex' and they think small." [12]

General Eisenhower, while serving his apprenticeship as President of Columbia University, expressed his devotion to Big Business and found it to be the bulwark of our nation. Yet, he confessed to some worriment. "Big-Business men" he said, "have been in position of leadership" for many, many decades, yet he would not "give a perfect and clean bill of health to many of the individuals who have operated Big Business." Why? Because these men in control "have not succeeded in this: making everybody understand that the thing we are competing about is the product we produce—let us say the Ford against the Chevrolet—and building loyalty around such competitive articles rather than loyalty of class against class." [13]

In all fairness, I feel impelled to remark that President Eisenhower, bearing in mind his noble perspective, seems to have somewhat stacked his Cabinet on the Chevrolet side!

The Anti-Monopoly Tradition

It will not be amiss to indicate briefly how deeply rooted is the American people's fear and hatred of monopoly. Among those who have given expression to negative thoughts and manifested a "midget complex" were Presi-

dents from Abraham Lincoln to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. To cite but two, it was Grover Cleveland who wrote, in 1902, after leaving the Presidency: "The tremendous growth of trusts, the immense business aggregations and the manner in which they stifle healthful competition and throttle individual enterprise cannot long pass unheeded by the voters of the land"; while Woodrow Wilson flatly announced in 1912, before becoming President: "The masters of the government of the United States are the combined capitalists and manufacturers of the United States."

The persistent anti-monopolist tradition is compounded of Jeffersonian equalitarianism, Populism and its protest against the merciless throttling of the small farmer and businessman by monopoly capitalism, and the special contributions coming from the people particularly oppressed as a whole, notably the Negro people. Most important, the tradition is composed of that profound anti-monopolist feeling emanating from the class—the working class—which stands in most direct and lasting opposition to Big Business. Embodying the basic anti-monopolist drive of this class is its science, Marxism-Leninism, which fuses, transforms, carries to a new high level all the detestation of Big Business that permeates American history.

From the working class a relevant quotation may be offered. Thus, the preamble to the constitution of the Knights of Labor, 1878:

> The recent alarming development and aggression of aggregated wealth, which, unless checked, will inevitably lead to the pauperization and hopeless degradation of the toiling masses, render it imperative, if

> we desire to enjoy the blessings of life, that a check should be placed upon its power. . . .

It is, in part, the vitality and tenacity of this tradition in the American labor movement, as well as, basically, the political and economic conditions of today, that explain why Senator Humphrey (D., Minn.) moved the delegates at the recent (1953) CIO Convention to cheer when he denounced "the financial barons" now "in the driver's seat" in Washington, who were "greedily looting the public's resources." It is this growing awareness among the workers—an awareness having profound roots in the historical tradition—of the menace that Big Business represents to prosperity, security, freedom and peace which most disturbs the monopolists.

Examples of the petty-bourgeois opposition to Big Business, especially coming from the farmers, are legion. Characteristic is this sentence from the Populist Party Platform, 1892:

> The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of these, in turn, despise the Republic and endanger liberty.

One of the earliest Negro newspapers, the N. Y. *Weekly Advocate,* back in 1837, included among its purposes opposition to "all Monopolies, which oppress the poor and laboring classes of our society." This is a theme running through the entire record of the Negro people.[14]

"The Intellect Has Become Suspect"

Central to the monopolists' effort to root out this tra-

dition is the struggle to win over the mind of youth—naturally fresh, eager, brave, vigorous, challenging—bearers of the future. Of the myriad vehicles through which Big Business seeks to gain the intellectual allegiance of the youth we wish here to deal briefly only with one—the educational system, from public school through university.

The American ruling class suspects reason, and fears intelligence, for after all the final refutation of an unreasonable system is reason.

Thus, Eric Baber, a school superintendent in Illinois, finds that the main trouble with the schools is that they remain "concentrated too much on the intellectual aspect of education." This is wrong, he says, as "is evidenced by the fact that many $20,000 to $100,000 a year jobs . . . are held by persons with I. Q.'s of less than ninety."[15] The editors of *Fortune* report that certain business firms now give prospective employees I. Q. tests in order "to eliminate people above a certain level."[16]* The same editors, in another volume which, among other things, tells the corporation executive's wife how to "get along," admonish: "The good corporation wife does not make her friends uncomfortable by . . . excessive good breeding. And intellectual pretensions she avoids like the plague."[17]

The *New York Times* (October 25, 1953) quotes Dr. O. M. Wilson, executive secretary of the Fund for the Advancement of Education, as saying, directly: "Even in the business of education, the intellect has become sus-

* These remarks are not to be taken as defending the scientific validity of these so-called intelligence tests—the tests have no such validity. But the material is quoted as indicative of the fear of intelligence *per se*.

pect." Business men, says the paper, "shy away from those with Phi Beta Kappa keys." *Collier's Magazine,* some time ago (Feb. 5, 1949), published an article called "It's Smart To Be Stupid," which insisted quite seriously that "in many ways it's better to be stupid" and that "a high I. Q. is a definite liability."

Congressman Velde, chairman of the Un-American Activities Committee, in opposing a bill sponsoring public library demonstrations, summed it all up in one sentence: "The basis of all communistic and socialistic influences is education of the people."[18] One knows now what the Hon. Mr. Velde has been seeking in his investigation of schools!

Big Business and the Schools

The capitalist stranglehold upon our educational system with its resulting chauvinism, jingoism, militarism, over-crowding, hounding of teachers, class and religious and racial barriers to admission, has been thoroughly documented and analyzed in numerous writings.*

Here we wish to note the intensified attention being given by Big Business in terms of its overt domination of the educational apparatus. The National Association of Manufacturers spends a million dollars a day in an effort to make the American people believe, to quote Mr. Wilson's immortal, if repudiated, remark, that "what is good for General Motors is good for the country." Much

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* Outstanding in this connection is Samuel Sillen's *Cold War in the Classroom* (N. Y., 1950) where references to the relevant literature will be found.

of this money is aimed directly at the nation's schools. Thus, NAM's *Catalogue of Teacher Aids* has gone out to over 25,000 principals and heads of social science departments and this mailing alone brought requests for over 3,000,000 pieces of free Big-Business propaganda. According to the NAM, their booklets reach almost 70 per cent of the high-school students of the country and in many schools are required reading. Today the NAM has what it calls a "College-Speaking Program" which provides for "leading industrialists to carry the message of American enterprise before student assemblies at institutions of higher learning across the nation." As a result, scores of thousands of students and teachers "have been impressed with the benefits of the individual enterprise system."[19]

Curricula are currently being completely revised in line with this campaign. Thus, in 1953, the New York State curriculum for "Citizenship Education" for grades 7, 8, and 9 has been re-done. Indicative is the new "Unit" added for the ninth grade—"Our American Economic System"—in which an idyllic transformation of monopoly capitalism is put over on the children as "American." Similarly, the "Unit" dealing with "Organized Workers" includes therein "employer organizations," and offers as the "responsibilities of the individual worker," (the employer has none) "maximum production" and "regard . . . for the public interest."[20]

On the level of university education, of course multimillionaires have been and remain the trustees of universities and colleges. But the domination of these institutions by Big Business (merging with the military) is

more blatant and complete than hitherto. Gilbert W. Chapman, president of the Yale and Towne Manufacturing Co., says: "American business has largely supplanted the individual private donor as a major source of university funds. Last year (1952) approximately $60,000,000 was given to colleges by corporations."[21]

Indeed, the soliciting of money from corporations on behalf of colleges is itself now an organized large-scale enterprise. For example, there exists the Empire State Foundation of Independent Liberal Arts Colleges, representing twenty-two New York Colleges. Its Chairman of the Board is the president of Union College and this educator explains that his Foundation makes it possible for "the business corporations . . . to give financial help to liberal education without the agonies of deciding that College A deserves help rather than College B."[22]

* * *

We have seen that the roots of popular hatred of Big Business are very deep and that the tycoons know this. It is one thing, and important to them, to insist that monopoly capitalism is, indeed, the "American" way of life—to equate Wall Street with the spirit of the nation. But for Wall Street, intent upon its plans for a new global war and observing the world-wide decay of imperialism, it is vital that the people's past, the history of their country, be reshaped completely in the image of Big Business. He who controls the past thereby may better dominate the present and shape the future. Thus, history-writing is central to the ideological battle of our time.

Ideas of the "Standard" Historians

Of course, in an economy dominated by the bourgeoisie, its scribes dominate the writing of the country's history. The historians whose writings form the core of this country's textbooks, whose opinions have been soaked up day after day and decade after decade by every literate American, have been from and for the capitalists.

Of one of them—Woodrow Wilson—his latest biographer remarks: "He had never known economic insecurity, or poverty, or dread of the future; never had he had any intimate contact with men of the working classes." Thus may they nearly all be characterized: the Adamses, Bancroft, Beer, Burgess, Channing, Dunning, Fiske, Hart, Mahan, McMaster, Oberholtzer, Osgood, Phillips, Rhodes, Schouler, etc.

As one of them, James Ford Rhodes, himself remarked, they conceived of history-writing as an "aristocratic profession" or "the rich man's pastime." These individuals—whose fathers were well-to-do Congregational divines (Bancroft), or state secretaries to such as Henry Clay (Fiske), or who were themselves wealthy capitalists (George L. Beer in tobacco, Rhodes in iron), or ghost-writers for Presidents (Bancroft for Johnson, McMaster for McKinley), or in-laws of President-makers (Mrs. Rhodes was the daughter of Mark Hanna), or rear-admirals (Mahan), or editors of frankly Big-Business organs (Oberholtzer)—wrote history in very much the same way as bourgeois judges have traditionally interpreted and administered the law, and for very much the same reasons, except that the historians have been even less amenable

to mass political pressure than have been the judges.

Naturally, such individuals had "a somewhat careful solicitude for the preservation of wealth," as has been remarked of Schouler; of course in their books the "wage-earner and farmer rarely appears" as was said of McMaster. Certainly one like Fiske would detest the Populists and Rhodes thought of workers as "always overbearing and lawless," while to Oberholtzer labor-organizers were veritable demons, guilty of "follies and excesses," who turned "foreign rabble" into "murderous mobs." Clearly, such "wretches"—like the Haymarket Martyrs—were destined for "their not unmerited end on the scaffold"![23]

The works of all the "standard" historians exude ultra-nationalism, and a white chauvinism so vicious that they write of the Negro people—when mentioning them at all—as another might write of offensive animals.

The Need for a "New Look"

Well, one might inquire: what more could Big Business want? Is this not an historiography after the master's own image?

Yes; but with age the image alters, and the demands correspondingly shift. The present situation of the American imperialists reminds one of that of the American slaveowners in the 1850's. Certainly, in the previous generation the slavocratic ideologists had justified their masters' system, but with that system facing increasing threats from within and from without and being eaten up alive with its own necessities to expand or die, the slaveowners demanded, and got, from their penmen, a new note. They

demanded and got slavocratic ideology which was in no sense defensive or apologetic. It was brazen and mounted an offensive. Slavery now became an overwhelming good, the decisive civilizing agent, the preserver of culture, the savior of freedom, the secret of the nation's strength and growth. To illustrate the shift one need but compare the writings of two pro-slavery Virginians—Thomas R. Dew of the 1830's and George Fitzhugh of the 1850's.

So with the American imperialists of today—again a ruling class in decay and in crisis, being driven mad by the incurable failing of its social system. The past history-writing was not sufficiently strident and arrogant in its defense of monopoly capitalism; not sufficiently slashing. Nothing namby-pamby now. We, the big bosses, the tycoons, we are the noble, creative ones, the heart and soul and skeleton and brains and blood of America, and we're so good that we ought to have the world.

And no one must question this. Of course, with Marxists we do not debate. Here, as Dr. Joseph Goebbels and Dr. Sidney Hook have so well put it, one faces a police problem and one jails, not debates. But the liberals and the muck-rakers like J. Allen Smith and Vernon L. Parrington and the young Charles A. Beard, with their qualms and picayune concern about "honesty" and "decency" and other balderdash are also quite trying. They vacillate, they spread seeds of doubt, they are not sufficiently aggressive. We do not want a "defense," we want a positive, passionate assertion of the indispensability of our class. We want, in a word, say the imperialists now, a written-history which identifies our needs, and deeds, our schemes and dreams with the needs and deeds and schemes and

dreams of America. Make *us* America!

Which historians have undertaken this task? What are their arguments? How shall their arguments be met? With these questions we shall deal in the following pages.

B. The Chief Performers

The pioneer Big-Business historian is N. S. B. Gras, professor of "Business History" at Wall Street's academic extension—Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration. This approach was institutionalized, in the halcyon twenties, with the establishment of the Business Historical Society, Inc., located at Harvard and under Professor Gras' functioning leadership. For almost thirty years this Society has been publishing a monthly *Bulletin* promoting and recording the development of a Big-Business historiography.

The Society, an affiliate of the American Historical Association—leading national organization of historians—has been sponsoring, since the close of World War II, Fellowship Awards aimed at graduate students and young teachers. Each award carries with it a grant of $2,500 and twelve months' study at the above-mentioned School, the object being, in the words of the award, "to help prepare mature students for teaching American business history."

In addition the Society established the Business History Foundation—also after the Second World War—which helps finance leaves of absence for professors so that they may engage in producing business histories. Thus, for example, at the behest of the Foundation, Professor Kenneth W. Porter, of Vassar, left his teaching post and went

to Texas in order to write the history of the Humble Oil Company.*

Also since the start of the Cold War, the Business Historical Society has been participating actively in the annual meetings of the American Historical Association—gatherings of great influence upon writers and teachers of history in this country. Typical of this development was the 62nd Annual Meeting (December, 1947) of the Association, where four of the sessions dealt with "business history," and where the Society sponsored, jointly with the Association, two meetings on "Problems in the Writing of the History of Large Business Units." Prof. Gras presided at one; Charles W. Moore, head of the SKF industries, at the other. Professor Henrietta M. Larson—a protege of Gras', editor of the *Bulletin* of the Business Historical Society, and a teacher of Business History at Harvard—struck the keynote:

> It is exciting to think that before our very eyes the gulf between the scholar and the business man is narrowing and close cooperation between them is developing on a high professional level.[24]

Further, under the aegis of this Business Historical Society, the Harvard University Press has published about twenty volumes (the *Harvard Studies in Business History*)

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* Such chores sometimes come more directly—in 1948, Prof. P. H. Giddens, of Allegheny College, left his post to write a history of the Standard Oil Co. of Indiana. The Company paid for this, not quite openly: it granted the money to the College which then paid the Professor and relieved him of his teaching assignment. The *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* in joyously announcing this arrangement (June, 1948, p. 118) made it clear that Prof. Giddens retained "complete academic freedom" in writing his history.

immortalizing the contributions of John Jacob Astor, Jay Cooke, Macy's Department Store, and other creators of the American Way of Life.

With the end of World War II, New York University got into the act. It established, in 1945, the New York Committee on Business Records, with one of its history professors, Thomas C. Cochran, as executive secretary. The same year this Committee published a pamphlet, written by Prof. Cochran, *Why Corporations Should Open Their Records to Scholars.* There were three very important reasons: (1) "the individual firm is the real maker of economic history"; (2) most of the material now available "is biased, coming as it does from government indictments and investigations"; (3) "every business had had labor troubles at times. . . . The public knows little about labor from management's point of view."

With this objective viewpoint the Press of New York University launched in 1948, its "Business History Series," Professor Cochran, the editor. He, too, authored the series' first volume, *The Pabst Brewing Company.* Dean G. Rowland Collins, of the Graduate School of Business Administration of N.Y.U., in a foreword, declared: "Business . . . is humanity's chiefest task"; hence, "The history of American business, in a very real sense, is the basic history of these United States." So, modestly, did he launch what he called the "objective and scholarly" Business History Series. After Pabst Beer, the Series promises us, early in 1954, a history of the Norfolk and Western Railway. Thrilling and endless is the vista!*

* Probably of increasing importance in the future will be The Conservation of Human Resources project of the Graduate School of Business,

Professor Gras of Harvard

The most influential volume yet produced, however, by these professional "business historians," was one which appeared in 1939. It was written by Professors Gras and Larson, and entitled *Casebook in American Business History* (Crofts & Co., N. Y.). The volume grew out of the need for a text to service the courses in "business history" then being given at Harvard—and only at Harvard. But with the onset of the Cold War, university after university added a course in business history (frequently dropping conventional economic history courses in the process).

In almost all of these courses, and in certain others, attended each semester by as many as 250 freshmen and given in universities throughout the country, the Gras-Larson book is the text. The volume, in propounding the glories of Big Business, is basically fascist in its viewpoint. Its theme is the glory of monopolization of the means of production and the necessity of what it calls "national capitalism," which it identifies, explicitly, with fascism (p. 13). Its hero is Benito Mussolini. Mussolini had "the revolutionary labor leaders" put "in exile or otherwise taken care of" [!] (p. 13) and he, in fact, "gave new life to Italy." Italy's masses "seem enthusiastic," even if war preparations have lowered their "planes of living."

Columbia University. This was established in 1950 by General Eisenhower (then President of Columbia) and its finances come from the Ford Foundation, the American Can Company, Consolidated Edison of New York, DuPont, General Electric, Standard Oil of New Jersey, and seven or eight other monster corporations. So far, this project has concentrated on wastage of human labor power, producing *The Uneducated* in 1953, and promising *The Inefficient Soldier* soon.

"Investors are protected, and industrialists, large and small, are encouraged to produce" while—under Hitler as under Mussolini—labor occupies "a position of honorable subordination." This arrangement "is the most that can be expected under" present conditions (pp. 13, 15, 756). It is true, says the Gras-Larson textbook, that "Big Businessmen, Jews, and international bankers hold to a price economics" rather than "national capitalism," but this is sheer backwardness (p. 763). Finally, if Big Business is not on top what is the alternative? See it, and shudder: "In socialistic Russia the labor-consumer point of view prevails" (p. 764). In short—fascism or barbarism!

Such is the textbook now in use in New York University and Harvard, the University of Nebraska, and at least a dozen other universities, without raising an eyebrow among the Guardians of Loyalty on the Un-American Activities Committee!

Another volume, *Business and Capitalism*: *An Introduction to Business History* (also published by Crofts & Co., in 1939), even more nakedly expressed the fascist and anti-Semitic biases of Professor Gras. The greater clarity issues from the fact that the volume is not a "casebook," but is analytical and descriptive throughout and, moreover, issues solely from Gras' pen. This volume, while not used as a textbook in as many institutions as the Gras-Larson volume, is used as such in several and as recommended collateral reading in more. Four selections—more are available—from this influential book are offered to give substance to the above characterization:

> There seem to be five principal parts to the introduction of national capitalism. First, there is

> the curbing of financial capitalists. The internationally-minded financiers, including all Jews in some lands, are to be shorn of their fleece (pp. 325-26).
>
> The symbol [of the Nazis] is the cross-like swastika which may indicate that people are on the run, especially foreign enemies, and domestic Jews. The economic counterpart of the political naziism is national capitalism (p. 343).
>
> From 1914 to 1923, Germany labored under the stress first of war and then of currency depreciation. . . . In the era of depreciation certain business men, notably Hugo Stinnes, got titles to property which they later paid for in depreciated currency. In so far as the Jews did this, they were laying up trouble for themselves (p. 344).
>
> Under naziism German courage and self-respect were restored. All men were employed. Strikes and threats of communism ceased. Party strife ended because there was only one party recognized. Private business was told to go ahead and that it would receive every assistance. Farmers were encouraged and home-making and home life glorified (p. 346).

Obviously, Professor Gras' distinguished position at Harvard is not among that university's attributes that distress Senator McCarthy.

Professor Gras has been a true bell-wether for a Big-Business "coordinated" historiography to help prepare the way for a fascist America. In 1941 he announced:

> The social philosophy that we need today is the one that has business in it. No nation more than America and no name more than Rockefeller could effectively assume that leadership.[25]

And, in 1949:

> In the struggle which is at hand in the cold war

> and which threatens to break out in more violent form, there is still an opportunity which we should not miss. We can make private business capitalism into a religion comparable to its rival, Communism. That this would accentuate the degree of current irrationality is not to be denied. . . .[26]

The crusade is on, and the accentuation of irrationality goes on apace.

Monopoly's Triumvirate

Courageously leading the hosts onward is a triumvirate. One instructs in the philosophy of history at a bastion of Social Democracy, the New School for Social Research in New York. Another, in the "emotional thirties," called himself a Marxist—though he never went beyond Charles Beard—and even founded a short-lived periodical mistitled—invitingly for the period—*Marxist Quarterly*. Today, converted to Big Business idolatry, this one is Dean of the School of General Studies of Columbia University (an eminence achieved, through sheer coincidence, after the conversion). The last, Professor of American History at Columbia University, and two-time Pulitzer Prize Winner, possesses other momentous distinctions that will be mentioned in due course.

The first, Dr. Edward N. Saveth, announces in Big Business' own magazine, *Fortune* (April, 1952) the delightful news: "U.S. historians have begun a re-examination, long overdue, of the role they have traditionally assigned to business and the businessman."

This New School instructor finds that what "abuses in

business practice" there may possibly have been, "were byproducts of the tremendous efforts by men who, with limited capital in a relatively poor [!] and vast country, performed miracles of material accomplishment." Saveth concludes by quoting his comrade-in-arms, the aforementioned Dean—Louis M. Hacker—who finds and bravely announces: "Capitalism was a success." "It is," urges the New Schooler, "this point of view rather than the sour muckraker indictment, that should find increasing acceptance among historians."

Louis M. Hacker

The Dean, as his four words quoted above indicate, is zealously atoning for a somewhat exuberant youth. He now thoroughly appreciates, as he puts it, "the extraordinary picture of American enterprise" that the business elite produced. He understands them to be the backbone of "economic stability and progress," to be "the boldly venturesome and socially creative" personalities in American history.[27]

The Dean developed his views on this matter at length as the American member of a rather private and highly select international gathering assembled to consider "the treatment of capitalism by historians." The gathering took place in France in September, 1951, and papers were presented by Prof. Silberschmidt of Switzerland, Prof. Ashton of England, Bertrand de Jouvenal of France—and our own Louis Hacker. Mr. Hacker discussed "The Anti-capitalist Bias of American Historians"—a bias which he found to be well-nigh universal, like the Communist bias of Pro-

testant Ministers so distinctly discernible to another eminent American scholar—Dr. J. B. Matthews.

In his paper, Dean Hacker set himself the amiable task of saving capitalism "from the opprobrium from which it suffers." He is particularly concerned with the concept so prevalent in New Deal days and circles—that "capitalism is stagnant and dominated by monopolists," and finds most serious the fact that in the United States "the case for capitalism lacks impressive defenders," an attractively self-deprecating remark.

The central difficulty, he finds, is that Marx made capitalism "synonymous with exploitation" and that certain historians "have been responsible for the perpetuation of the slander." Actually, he finds, capitalism is a system responsible for "the alleviation of human suffering" and when historians fully understand this and "treat their material more sensitively"—not to say sensibly—then the identification of capitalism with exploitation "will undergo drastic revision."*

Allan Nevins

But it is the last of the three who is the prize showpiece, and leading showman, of the Big Business devotees. This is Allan Nevins, possessor of a career as distinguished and successful as the current American society offers a non-fiction writer. Mr. Nevins was an editorial associate of the *N. Y. World,* the *N. Y. Sun,* the *N. Y. Post* and *The*

* Mr. Hacker's paper is published in *Capitalism and Historians,* edited by F. A. Hayek (University of Chicago Press, 1954). Mr. Hayek is the author of that ultimate apologia for imperialist economics, *The Road to Serfdom.* Prof. Gras' work is alluded to with great respect in this volume.

Nation. He was a Professor of History at Cornell and for over twenty years has been Professor of American History at Columbia. He has taught at Oxford, too, and wrote, at the request of the American Ambassador in London, a brief history of the United States which serves as the text for courses in England and in West Germany. Since World War II he served two tours of duty in London for the State Department as Chief Public Affairs Officer.

Professor Nevins has authored, or co-authored, edited, or co-edited, perhaps thirty volumes of history and biography and has served as over-all editor of several influential series of books, especially two published by Yale, *The Chronicles of America* and *The Pageant of America.* In addition to winning the Pulitzer Prize ($25,000) twice, he has won the $10,000 Scribner award recently for his *Ordeal of the Union,* a two-volume study of American history from 1847 to 1857. Each of Mr. Nevins' books has been influential, and some, like *The Pocket History of the United States* and *The Heritage of America* (both done in collaboration with Henry Steele Commager), have sold very widely. If one adds the fact that he writes with some regularity for the *N. Y. Times,* the *N. Y. Herald Tribune,* the *Saturday Review,* etc., and that he authors radio scripts occasionally, it becomes clear that no more influential historian exists in the United States than Allan Nevins.*

With these honors, this prestige, this influence, Prof.

* Further evidence is his recent appointment as Director of the American Jewish History Center. The Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, in announcing the establishment of the Center said that, "the future of American civilization depends on America's spiritual leadership of the world in our time." (*N. Y. Times,* Nov. 29, 1953.) The Big-Business historian embodies this spiritual leadership.

Nevins has now stepped forward as the leading advocate of the re-writing of American history in the image of monopoly capitalism. He has done this on certain extremely well-publicized occasions.

In 1951, speaking at a Stanford University history conference to hundreds of college and high-school teachers of American history, Mr. Nevins called for, in the words of the *New York Times* (Aug. 6, 1951), "a vast change in the historical interpretation of America's industrial revolution." Nevins told the teachers that "the Rockefellers, Carnegies, Hills and Morgans" were "the heroes of our material growth." Looked at soberly and conscientiously, such men "stand forth in their true proportions as builders of an indispensable might." Yes, these were the builders of America. Any other view smacks of "feminine idealism," said the masculine realist. No longer must we speak or think or teach "of robber barons who were not robber barons at all." "A great injustice" has been done these heroes and we must eliminate "the apologetic attitude" so common in the New Deal days.

Presiding at the conference was Professor Edgar E. Robinson, director of Stanford's Institute of American History. Mr. Nevins' eloquent appeal for the mending of a great injustice touched this pious scholar and he exclaimed:

> Thank God I live at a time when I can hear one of the leading American historians declare his faith in America. I hope we never have to go through another period known as debunking. It is bad for the disposition and highly dangerous for the nation.

That Professor Robinson should equate his indisposi-

tion with the nation's insecurity reflects, I fear, something other than the humility befitting so eminent a scholar. Apparently he over-excited himself. He did, however, get Nevins' point. The scholars composing the editorials of the *New York Daily News* were also profoundly touched. Being of a somewhat less elevated turn of mind than Professor Robinson, they did not attribute Mr. Nevins' vision to the Lord, but they did rejoice (Aug. 12, 1951) that the "creators and present-day trainers and improvers of the American industrial giant will soon be getting their just deserts from our writers and teachers of history." The *New York Times* (Aug. 7, 1951) also hailed Mr. Nevins' brilliance and was especially impressed with his repudiation of the idea that the Morgans and Rockefellers had been exploiters. Builders, not exploiters—yes, that was well put.

In 1953 Professor Nevins was asked to speak at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists. Here he made, in substance, the same speech he had delivered two years before in Stanford. This time he referred to Rockefeller, Carnegie, Hill and Ford, rather than Rockefeller, Carnegie, Hill and Morgan, as men, who would "yet stand forth in their true stature as builders of a strength which civilization found indispensable," but the slight change in nomenclature may be ascribed to the scholar's pre-occupation with the details of his work—Mr. Nevins is now engaged in a two-volume history of the Ford Motor Company and has been given access to the Ford family papers. We presume Mr. Nevins will also examine Henry Ford's public paper, *The Dearborn Independent*—trail-blazer for Julius Streicher.

New, too, was Mr. Nevins' finding that these American saviors of civilization created an industrial revolution at much less cost in human terms than was true in England, Germany or Japan, and, of course, "far less" than in the U.S.S.R. "Here," he said, "is a wide field for the re-writing of American history and for the re-education of the American people" (*N. Y. Times,* Sept. 20, 1953).*

C. How Valid Is Big-Business History-Writing?

So much for a summary of the main thesis of the new Big-Business school of history-writing.** We turn now to an analysis of its validity. We shall do this by an examination of its findings in certain key areas and aspects of American history. In this examination we shall use in great part the writings of Mr. Nevins, himself—the most eminent advocate of the Big-Business historiography. The content and methodology of this "new" viewpoint will be demonstrated in part by comparing and contrasting the pre-Big Business Nevins with the current one.

It should first be mentioned that Mr. Nevins, both before and after his new vision, has not been averse to writing openly subsidized Big Business vanity histories.

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* A request to Prof. Nevins, at Columbia University, for a copy of this speech brought a reply, after several weeks, from the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn. The Company kindly, "at Professor Nevins' request," as it wrote, sent me a multigraphed copy of this Address. *The Saturday Review* published it on February 6, 1954.

** As one would expect, the influence of this school is spreading quickly. Its thesis is already repeated in textbooks. See: Harvey Wish, *Society and Thought in Modern America* (Longmans, Green, N. Y., 1952) p. 190; and in popularizations—See: Stewart Holbrook, *The Age of the Moguls* (Doubleday, N. Y., 1953), preface.

Thus, in 1934, the Bank of New York and Trust Company published its *History,* from Mr. Nevins' pen, and in 1946 the United States Lines engaged the same biographer. In each case, needless to say, the performance was rendered *con passione.*

We turn, however, to Mr. Nevins' academic, rather than commercial, writings.

Mr. Nevins' Several Rockefellers

Among these the first clear evidence of Mr. Nevins' turn was his two-volume biography of John D. Rockefeller published by Scribner's in 1940 and subtitled *The Heroic Age of American Enterprise.* The discerning Professor Gras, whose own views and values we have already described, wrote of this work:

> In these two splendid volumes I think I see some cross-currents of opinion on the part of the author. There seems to be, for instance, a subtle conflict between the point of view of the petty capitalist and that of the industrial [*i.e.,* the monopoly] capitalist.[28]

Professor Gras' reading of the volumes convinced him that the author had resolved this conflict in his own mind in favor of the monopolist and hence concluded: "Prof. Nevins may have preceded the American people in working out a more considered attitude toward the great industrialists of the last century."

A reading of these volumes, published thirteen years ago, confirms the astuteness of Prof. Gras' judgment. In them Mr. Nevins saw Rockefeller as of "the guiding elite . . . of our industrial society." He admitted that "some of

his [Rockefeller's] methods were open to criticism; but then," he went on, "it must be remembered that he had to use the weapons and implements of his time." Rockefeller and his partners, the biographer was certain, had been devoid of greed or base motivations, but had rather been moved by the drives for "competitive achievement and self-expression." Nevins' close is a veritable panegyric. Rockefeller, he wrote:

> . . . by virtue of his organizing genius, his tenacity of purpose, his keenness of mind, and his firmness of character, looms up as one of the most impressive figures of the century which his lifetime spanned (II, p. 714).

In these 1940 volumes, too, Nevins was already sharply critical of what Dr. Saveth a dozen years later was to call "the sour muckraker indictment." He especially attacked one of the most penetrating and influential of the muckrakers, Henry Demarest Lloyd, whose historic *Wealth Against Commonwealth* (1894) had pioneered in analyzing critically the activities of monopolies, including Rockefeller's.

Of Lloyd's volume, the pre-Rockefeller Nevins had written:

> *Wealth against Commonwealth* was a searching exposure, amply buttressed by detail, of the iniquities of the trusts and of big business in general. Nothing escaped Lloyd's keen eye. . . . The combination of the beef-packers to increase prices; the monopoly of the anthracite fields by a group of closely associated railroads, and their oppression of miners and consumers alike; the activities of the sugar trust . . .; the secret control of the Union Stock Yard by interests profiteer-

> ing on the farmer; the operations of the tobacco trust; the helplessness of the Interstate Commerce Commission in the face of flagrant stockwatering, rate-boosting and rebate-making; above all, the history of the Standard Oil Company, and its sordid record of business piracy—all this was laid bare in more than five hundred calm, unemotional pages (*Grover Cleveland,* N. Y. 1932, p. 607).

But of the same book the Rockefeller Nevins (1940 vintage—as we shall see there is a 1953 brand) had written:

> As a polemic for the times it was magnificent; as a piece of industrial history it was almost utterly worthless. . . . It created a stage Rockefeller as unreal as the stage Irishman . . . any critical scrutiny of the book in the light of present day knowledge of business history and economic principles shows that it was full of prejudice, distortion, and misrepresentation (II, p. 334).[29]

The reader will recall, however, that Professor Gras, in writing of the 1940 biography of Rockefeller, was troubled by the existence of "some cross-currents of opinion" on Nevins' part; Gras reported that he saw still remaining in Nevins some petty-bourgeois conceptions, something still short of an uninhibited embrace of "the great industrialists."

What remnants troubled the Dean of "business-historians"? It is especially illuminating to examine this because Mr. Nevins has published, in 1953, again through Scribner's, another two-volume biography of John D. Rockefeller, this one subtitled: *Industrialist and Philanthropist.* In the preface, Mr. Nevins feels compelled to assure the reader that he is a "truthseeker." From a mod-

ern Diogenes, he is confident "business need fear no misrepresentation; and the critical public need apprehend no deception." Then, in the manner made famous by yet another modern Diogenes—Vice-President Richard Nixon, himself—Mr. Nevins includes in his preface a telescoped financial statement. He writes: "I have scrupulously kept myself free from financial obligation and have in fact accepted heavy penalties in devoting so much time and toil to a book whose royalties can hardly meet my personal costs of research." Thus, we see that Rockefeller's life has become Mr. Nevins' income-tax deduction.

But this is not all. Mr. Nevins chronicles yet another—more subtle, perhaps, but also most tempting—snare which he is happy to have had the character to have avoided. He has disciplined himself to the point of foregoing the delights of "proving an artificial 'courage' by pelting wealth with moral objurgations."

What fortitude! What modesty!! But—more to the point: what scholarship?

Mr. Nevins and Labor

Let us, then, compare the Big Business historian-aspirant (the Rockefeller biographer of 1940) with the Big-Business historian-master (the Rockefeller biographer of 1953).

The most revealing, the most sensitive area of comparison clearly is that of labor. While it is a fact that the Big-Business historians, in their eagerness to present the monopolists as men who "performed miracles of material accomplishment," who were the "socially creative" ones,

"the heroes of our material growth," do write as though Rockefeller drilled wells, or Gould built railroads or Guggenheim mined copper, and an amorphous mass, called the poor or the under-privileged or the unfortunates, lived in slums and afforded objects for the heroes' philanthropy—I say, while it is a fact that that is the way these Big-Business historians write, still, even for them, labor does exist, if only as a necessary evil!

To be blunt: Somebody must have *worked* for Rockefeller?! And perhaps in four volumes totalling two thousand pages, devoted to depicting the life and times of the head of a billion-dollar trust bestriding a basic industry —perhaps in such circumstances our Big-Business historian devotes some attention to the workers?*

Precious little, even for the Big-Business historian-aspirant; still less, and that differently, for the Big-Business historian-master.

Both editions devote appendices to what is called "The Standard's Labor Policy." The appendices are identical—with an exception, to be noted—and take up not quite one page (in the 1940 edition, II, p. 721; in the 1953 edition, II, p. 480). The reader is informed that "Rockefeller insisted upon good wages and kindly treatment." Still "unions were discouraged." Again, Rockefeller "while generous in wage-policy, maintained a secret service department [whose] agents mingled with the workers and kept careful watch for labor agitators." So far, the his-

* It is important to note that the muckrakers, reflecting their petty-bourgeois limitations, also ignored labor. For example, Ida M. Tarbell, in her two-volume *History of the Standard Oil Company* (1904), ignores the whole question of labor.

torian-aspirant and historian-master are identical. But, the 1940 Nevins ends his Appendix with this sentence: "Nevertheless, the liberal activities of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in promoting the industrial representation system in various of the former Standard companies, *indicate that numerous employees became discontented with the paternalistic system.*" The 1953 Nevins extracts a different lesson from Junior's "liberal activities," and this shows the master's touch: "Nevertheless, the liberal activities of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in promoting the industrial representation system in various of the former Standard companies, *opened a new era in labor relations*"! (italics added).

This industrial representation system liberally sponsored by John D., Jr., and marking "a new era in labor relations" to our sacrificial, truth-seeking historian of 1953, was described in the following terms, in 1915, by the United States Commission on Industrial Relations:

> It embodies none of the principles of effectual collective bargaining and instead is a hypocritical pretense of granting what is in reality withheld. . . . The effectiveness of such a plan lies wholly in its tendency to deceive the public and lull criticism, while permitting the Company to maintain its absolute power.

The "industrial representation system" was in fact the parent of company unionism. It was the tactical reply of the labor-hating, union-hating Rockefellers to the rising trade-union consciousness and militancy of the American working class in the first decade of the twentieth century. It was, specifically, the Rockefellers' propaganda response to the horror that swept the nation after the ruthless

crushing of the fifteen-month long strike of 9,000 Colorado coal miners, culminating in the historic Ludlow Massacre of April 20, 1914. In that Massacre, gunmen hired and armed by the Rockefellers murdered 33 striking miners and their wives and children and shot or burned one hundred more.[30]

Mr. Nevins and the Ludlow Massacre

What about the Ludlow Massacre and historian Nevins, models 1940 and 1953? After all, the workers slaughtered had hitherto been recipients of Rockefeller's "kindly treatment." After all, the biggest mining company involved in the strike was the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, 40% of whose stock was owned by Rockefeller, whose officers were hired by Rockefeller and whose policy was initiated and controlled by Rockefeller. What does the Rockefeller biographer say?

In 1940 he finds it "a heart-rending incident." The origin of the shooting is uncertain, he says, but a footnote indicates the impression the author seeks to convey: "The strikers were accused of shooting at the militia from their tent colony, with fatal consequences to the women and children when the shots were returned." Still, the 1940 Nevins finds that "the abuses were serious," and that —while the executives chosen by Rockefeller were "men of integrity, courage, and ability," and while the miners "were not ill treated" from the owners' point of view (!), and while "the question of the closed shop or open shop had two sides," and while, "the question of responsibility for the Ludlow affray" is still open—still (saying it as

quickly and baldly as possible, but saying it) "the strikers were in the right."

Not very much for a strike and its murderous suppression which showed monopoly capitalism as its naked, characteristic, unrestrained self: wholesale corruption of politicians; fraud, terror and racism to prevent workers' organization; complete violation of law; merciless exploitation through miserable wages, interminable hours, company-owned stores, doctors, morticians, police and ministers; cheating and stealing (especially from compensation claims of injured workers and pension claims of workers' families). And then to crush rebellion against all this capitalist exploitation, calling out the Colorado National Guard, whose units, said the United States Commission investigating the massacre, "degenerated into a force of professional gunmen and adventurers who were economically dependent on and subservient to the will of the coal operators."

No, the Nevins of 1940, in view of all this, did not say very much, but saying that "the abuses were serious" and that "the strikers were in the right" was enough to evoke the well-mannered sigh of concern from Professor Gras as to the persistence of some distressing "cross-currents" in Nevins' work. Well, not so in the Nevins of 1953.

No, now the beam from our Diogenes' lantern reveals the full truth and so in the 1953 Rockefeller we find the Ludlow Massacre treated not in six pages but in a few lines of type ensconced within a chapter nobly entitled "The Well-Being of Mankind" (II, p. 391). Here it is, in full:

> In 1914 Rockefeller and his son became involved in the labor troubles of the Colorado Fuel and Iron

> Company, an unprofitable company in which they held a 40% interest. Since Rockefeller, then almost 75, had no active concern with the company, this story belongs to the biography of his son.[31]

"Since Rockefeller was almost 75"! But he died when he was 98, and he kept all his faculties to the end. And Nevins, in his 1940 volume (II, p. 686), states that Junior was not in charge of the Rockefeller empire until 1920. Moreover, Rockefeller's "benefactions" really begin after 1914 (it is after Ludlow and the consequent adverse publicity that Rockefeller hires Ivy Lee—"public relations" pioneer—with the assignment to make him a "philanthropist"), and Mr. Nevins is careful not to exclude *them* from his biography.

Mr. Nevins should have offered no excuses at all and simply exinguished his feeble lantern when, in his 1953 incarnation, he got to Ludlow. For the reality of Ludlow exposes the reality of Rockefeller—oppressive, cruel, uninsatiable—a true, a model Big Businessman. He who is laureate for such a monarch had best celebrate these, his greatest, victories—in becoming silence.

Mr. Nevins and Racism

The prize Big-Business historian displays a racism and, in particular, a white chauvinism that befit his assignment. Here, one finds plentiful seeds in the pre-Rockefeller Nevins, but the time of full blooming once again is now.

There is nothing narrow about the racial prejudices revealed in Mr. Nevins' writings. The American Indians, for example, were quite remarkable in that they "learned

far more of the vices than the virtues of their [white] neighbors," and if there was anything they might have taught or contributed one would never discover it from this source. "Contact of whites and redskins" was particularly unfortunate for the result was "a large half-breed population," and, as anyone knows who has gone to the movies—or read Mr. Nevins—"these half-breeds were usually an undesirable element, dissipated, cruel and lazy."[32]

Cubans, too. In the 1870's the people of Cuba were in rebellion against the tyranny of the Spanish Crown and this aroused considerable friendly interest amongst large numbers of Americans. Some suggested that the United States government might do well to express sympathy for the liberation efforts of the Cubans. But the American Secretary of State, Mr. Nevins reports, was a man of profound wisdom who, when in that island "had kept his eyes open" and therefore "placed a low estimate upon the intellectual and moral qualities of much of the population; he doubted the aptitude of this conglomerate of Indian, Negro, and Spanish blood for self-government. . . ."[33]

Irish, too. In the course of misrepresenting the efforts of the Pennsylvania coal miners to organize in the 1870's and slandering the so-called Molly Maguires as "sinister" and "criminal" whose practices of "assassination, mutilation and destruction of property" were exposed by the efforts of "a Pinkerton detective . . . employed by the enterprising head of the Reading Railroad"—Mr. Nevins finds an "explanation" for the "criminal" behavior in "the naturally lawless temper of the Irish miners."[34]

In fact, today, with America out to liberate the world—Great Britain a diffident auxiliary—it's pretty nearly every-

one except "the English-speaking peoples." Thus, very recently Mr. Nevins investigated the mysteries of statesmanship. He found that ability as such is not the secret of true statesmanship, for he reasoned: "Particularly among the English-speaking peoples, who prize the moral element more than most Continental or Asian folk, and who are stubbornly opposed to the Machiavellian prescription, does ability alone seem insufficient."[35] Yes, indeed, the whole world knows the lofty moral level of political conduct on the part of American office-holders.

Mr. Nevins and White Chauvinism

White chauvinism infests all of Mr. Nevins' history-writing, as it does the work of American white bourgeois historians from George Bancroft to Charles Beard. Yet, in this regard, too, though the idea is found blatantly expressed by Nevins a generation ago, it has taken on a new role in his current Big-Business period. Let us first note and comment upon this aspect of the earlier Nevins.

In a work dealing with the history of the United States from 1865-1878—that is, from the end of the Civil War to the end of Reconstruction—Nevins succinctly stated his view: "While slaves, the Negroes had been cared for, in health and sickness, by their masters; now [with emancipation] they were left to their own ignorance and carelessness."[36]

The masters "cared for" the slaves! From the slaves' labor, the masters got everything they had, and they "cared for" the slaves! The masters produced nothing but misery and agony; the slaves produced everything—they felled the forests, harvested the crops, prepared the meals, built the

houses, and created what music came out of slavery times—and the masters cared for the slaves! Yes, if the Rockefellers, Carnegies, Fords and Morgans were "the heroes of our material growth," then Calhoun, Davis, Stephens and Lee "cared for the slaves"!

Radical Reconstruction, Nevins felt, was an abomination. The constitutional conventions, marking its beginning, "drew up instruments guaranteeing all races entire equality, political and civil." Obviously such dreadful proposals were supported only by "an ignorant, illiterate, emotional mass of freedmen" who were led like sheep by "the hated Carpetbaggers . . . and the still more detested Scalawags."[37] The instruments were implemented and State after State found itself "manacled by strict provisos to safeguard the place of the Negro in its civic and social life."[38]

Education-wise, too, said our professor, Radical Reconstruction unloosed "a flood of calamities," namely: state funds would go only to non-Jim Crow institutions, and Negroes were to be admitted to the administration and classes of the universities.[39]

In brief, the Radical Reconstruction governments "were probably the worst that have ever been known in any English-speaking land."[40] Yet, all was not lost. For, though "the fine principles and traditions of the South's aristocracy were engulfed,"[41] still "little by little the self-respecting whites of the region gained the right of ruling themselves."[42] They threw off "the intolerable yoke," in large part through the interesting activities of the "picturesque Ku Klux Klan"—a noble organization, resisting "grotesque tyranny."[43]

It is clear, then, that for the Nevins of the twenties, thirties and early forties, Negro slavery is an ingenious device assuring security for pitifully incapable chattels. And the Ku Klux Klan, in its armed struggle against the Southern State governments, epitomizes the noble against the ignoble, the redeeming against the defiling, the superior against the inferior, divine liberty against grotesque tyranny.

Can the militant and fully-conscious Big-Business devotee improve on that? He is in the process of doing so. While his right hand produces four volumes on John D. Rockefeller, his left hand produces four other volumes on American history from the end of the War against Mexico to the beginning of the Civil War.* (Now his right hand is sifting the Ford family papers; his left hand is sorting out the notes for the Civil War and Reconstruction volumes).

The "improvement" is only slightly evident in the handling of slavery. It remains an institution with, as he puts it, a "lighter" and a "darker" side, and as for the "darker" side, certain "facts" must be borne in mind, namely: "The childlike character of many slaves, the half-savage character of some others, their opportunities for evading labor or destroying property, their imitative propensities, and the impossibility of making rewards. . . ." (*Ordeal,* I, 442). In his very latest volume (*The Statesmanship of the Civil War,* p. 52), Nevins stresses what he finds

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* They are: *Ordeal of the Union* (2 vols., N. Y., 1947, Scribner's); *The Emergence of Lincoln* (2 vols., N. Y., 1950, Scribner's). There is also a small one-volume preview of his Civil War work—*The Statesmanship of the Civil War* (N. Y., 1953, Macmillan).

to have been the "useful economic and social service" rendered by slavery. He finds that this "utility was nearing an end" by the time of the Civil War, but the end was not yet. This it was which was clear, at the time, to "most informed men" and they, therefore, wisely did not desire the abolition of the still "useful" slavery. Rather they wanted to "modify" it "soon" and to "relinquish" it "eventually." If only the masters had been left alone "to choose the hour and method" to begin slavery's "gradual extinction," all would have been well!

The "improvement" appears most clearly in two related areas: the treatment of the Abolitionists, and the explanation for the coming of the Civil War, itself.

The Abolitionists

The Abolititionists are, in fact, *the* villains of American history. Nevins never lost any love for them, of course. Indeed, the editors of the series for which his 1927 book, *The Emergence of Modern America, 1865-1878,* was produced (Professors A. M. Schlesinger and D. R. Fox) noted, with obvious gratification, that Nevins had written of the post-Civil War decade "without a single reference to either Charles Sumner or Thaddeus Stevens."* (All three savants —author and editors—were too immersed in chauvinism to

* This omission no doubt helped convince the editors of the *Dictionary of American Biography* that Nevins was the ideal choice for the sketch of Stevens. Nevins finds the great democrat to have been "a sinister figure in American history" (*D.A.B.,* N. Y., 1943, XVII, p. 625). Compare the language Nevins uses to describe this preeminent fighter for equality, democracy and freedom with his soft-soaping of such notorious political and financial gangsters as Oakes Ames, James Fisk, Jay Gould and Thomas C. Platt—all in the *D.A.B.*

even comment on the absence of Frederick Douglass.)

But in his latest work, it is the Abolitionists (to Nevins they are all white men—he mentions in this connection Birney, Garrison, Phillips, Parker, Higginson) who bear "a fearful responsibility before history." They were "men of malicious temper," leaders of an "intemperate crusade" who "wanted to hurt the South," who "positively exulted in talk of disruption, battle and bloodshed." What is their "fearful responsibility?" Nothing less than major precipitators of the Civil War, or, at least, major stumbling blocks to the discovery and working out of some reasonable *modus vivendi* which would have spared this country four years of devastation.**

Nevins finds John Brown "ignorant, narrow-minded . . . a thoroughly selfish egotist . . . with a vein of hard cruelty"; in fact, insane and "fanatically prejudiced" (*Ordeal,* II, 473). And he labels cowardly the behavior of Brown's friends and associates—Samuel G. Howe, Frank Sanborn, Frederick Douglass (in charging cowardice Nevins does *not* forget Douglass!) (*Emergence,* II, 94.)

It is fitting that the "new" history, the Big-Business history, whose heroes are Ford and Rockefeller, should spit upon John Brown and defame Frederick Douglass. It is fitting that the racist laureate of the most chauvinist ruling class in history should find John Brown prejudiced, selfish

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** Nevins also seems to indict "Southern extremists" as sharing this responsibility. But he can spare only one sentence in offering the indictment and the sentence really absolves. It reads: "They were strongest where Negro population was densest; not so much because slavery was most profitable there as because the problem of race adjustment was most difficult and Negro subordination seemed most imperative"—*Emergence of Lincoln,* I, 345.

and cruel, that John Brown who first among leading white figures in American history had consciously burned out of himself white supremacy, who fought for Negro emancipation side-by-side with Negroes, who died for Negro freedom side-by-side with Negroes. And of all the major statesmen in American history, the most courageous is Frederick Douglass, exactly the one called cowardly by the new Nevins.

The Civil War

But, what is the heart of Nevins' point that the Abolitionists bear a "fearful responsibility before history"? His point can only be understood in connection with his thesis as to the origin of the Civil War, and here we have another "advance" by the new Rockefeller-Nevins.

Allan Nevins, in his *Ordeal of the Union* and *The Emergence of Lincoln,* offers a racist interpretation of the Civil War's origin, and this pushes his racism—its role and function—well in advance of what it is in his earlier writings. This is the point: Nevins finds the Civil War to be the result of a failing of statesmanship. That is, the leadership of the nation could not resolve a central problem before it; therefore a forcible solution was undertaken.

What was this central problem, or, better, dilemma? Was it slavery? Not really; it was not slavery but rather "race adjustment." "The problem offered by the millions of Negroes far transcended slavery . . . the one really difficult problem was that of permanent race adjustment" (*Ordeal,* I, preface). Again: "The main root of the conflict (and there were minor roots) was the problem of

slavery *and* the future position of the Negro race in North America" (*Emergence* II, 468, 470; italics in original).

The reality of slavery in its economic, exploitative, commercial essence; the ownership of slaves as basic to the nature and power of the slavocracy; the predominant grip of that oligarchy over the Southern people—Negro and white—and its dominating hold over the national government; the increasing hatred of the Bourbons on the part of the non-slaveholding Southern whites, and the rising militancy of the slaves; the maturing, in quantity and quality, of the great Abolitionist movement; the internal contradictions of the slaveowners' economy forcing it to expand or die; and, fundamentally, the development of a Northern industrial bourgeoisie, working class, free-farming population with interests antagonistic to those of the dominant slaveowners—all these inter-related forces which together, upon the election of Lincoln, decided the slaveowning class to seek to overthrow the U.S. government by resorting to force and violence rather than accept the peaceable, democratic election results, and so led that class to overt treason, to launching a Civil War—all this is ignored.

No one, no class starts Mr. Nevins' Civil War. The war *comes,* and it comes not because the Negroes were slaves, but because they were slaves *and* Negroes, *i.e.,* "childlike and half-savage," because they were an inferior people and so could not be freed all at once—with no master to "care" for them—since this would make impossible "race adjustment."

The Abolitionists, fools and knaves, thought that: "The black man, once emancipated, would almost instantly become in all but color a white man" (*Emergence,* I, 344).

To Nevins, what else can be desired? Surely, Douglass wanted to be a white man—an "English-speaking" white man—like Nevins. Is a higher goal conceivable? Is it possible that the Negro people wanted not to be white, but to be free?

When Nevins makes the K.K.K. his hero and Stevens his villain he makes perfectly clear what *he* means by "race-adjustment." When Nevins writes that after Reconstruction, "The Negroes, where well-behaved, were, except in rare instances, left unmolested, and their rights were far more fully recognized than ever before,"[44] one knows what he means by "well-behaved" and understands where he gets the gall to speak of Negro people as puppies who must be "well-behaved" in his eyes. And when he speaks of "unmolested" he is not unmindful of the over 1750 Negroes *reported* as lynched from 1882 to 1900, and when he speaks of the recognition of rights he knows that the right to education, to vote, to hold office, to live without Jim Crow, to own land—all basic to terrible Reconstruction—were exactly the rights forcibly denied the Negro people after Reconstruction.

Nevins' racist interpretation of the Civil War's origin raises to a new operative level in the writing of American history (except for outright Southern apologists, like the late U. B. Phillips) the concept of white chauvinism—creature and bulwark of American imperialism.

So-Called "Heroes of Our Material Growth"

What shall one say of the fundamental argument of the Big-Business historians: that the monopolists were in fact

the builders of America's might, that they "performed miracles of material accomplishment," that they were "the heroes of our material growth"? Have the giant corporations become giants as a result of their positive role in American history?

Nevins insists that the monopolists—for example, Rockefeller—"did a truly creative work." The Big Business men, he argues, "made the most of the prodigious natural resources of the United States." True, "the growth of the big corporations was accompanied by many malpractices," but the point is that one should not concentrate on the "malpractices," but rather on the practices, and these were "truly creative."[45] Moreover, even in examining the malpractices, Nevins, again speaking of Rockefeller, says: "It is true that some of his methods were open to criticism; but then it must be remembered that he had to use the weapons and implements of his time."[46]

In the summary words of a recent textbook, reflecting the rising influence of the Big Business school of historians:

> The social and cultural shortcomings of the captains of industry in the transition of the United States to large-scale production must not obscure the fundamental contributions made by their energies to the unique American standard of living.[47]

The facts are otherwise. The facts are that the wealth of the tycoons was squeezed out of the hides of the American population. This wealth is the reward of capitalist exploitation; not of creative work.

D. Exploitation—Not Creation

The wealth of the American ruling class stems from the grossly underpaid and frantically driven American working and farming masses. Especially lucrative has been the super-exploitation of the Negro people in their millions—a million slaves in 1800, four millions in 1860, nine million peons and particularly exploited workers in 1900. And the American bourgeoisie battened, too, on the toil of the immigrant; from 1870 to 1900, the generation of the appearance of American monopoly capitalism, twelve and a half million men and women came to the United States from Europe and Asia, bringing with them little but strong arms and keen skills—and high hopes—and bestowing these upon the owners of mines, forests, land, factories, and thus immeasurably enriching those owners.

The American tycoons appropriated the phenomenal resources of our country—its minerals, its timber, its land, its water power—through graft, fraud and the especially benevolent legislative practices of their creatures—city, state and federal governments. Applying to this the labor power of the millions, who owned only that labor power, these tycoons wrested from this labor the greater part of their billions. This was profit thrice multiplied, but the coffers were to be swelled by the special profits made from wars—capitalism's most lucrative business—and from investments in and expropriations of the lands of other peoples, especially in Latin America and Asia.

And whatever social, political and economic advances the masses made were made only through organized, militant struggle against the ruling class. When unions were

organized, when working hours were shortened, when pay was raised, when safety conditions were improved, in every case, everywhere, the advances came because of the courage and strength of the working people and in spite of the fiercest and most brutal opposition of the bosses. To abolish slavery, to extend the suffrage, to establish public education, to eliminate imprisonment for debt, to obtain unemployment insurance, wherever gains have been made they have come only after the most bitter struggles against the ruling class, and they have been retained, if at all, only through constant resistance to the machinations of the rich.

These are the main facts, in barest outline, as to the wealth of the "heroes of material growth." So notorious are these facts that in the pre-Big Business era of history writing many of them were presented by the very same people who now insist on the Rockefeller view. Usually, it is true, even in those days, the facts were presented in a very partial fashion and as isolated data rather than as illuminating evidences of the nature of capitalism, especially monopoly capitalism. Still, some inkling of the truth did come through.

Some Inkling of the Truth

Thus, Allan Nevins himself once noted that, after the Civil War, the industrialists in accumulating their wealth dealt with their workers "without more consideration than dumb animals received," while their pockets were lined by grants and subsidies, by watered stocks and tariffs. He referred to businessmen buying out state legislatures like

"meat in the market" and gaining from them millions of dollars in franchises, rights-of-way, construction jobs, etc. Specifically of his later chief hero, selected by this earlier Nevins to sum up the devastating character of Big Business' role, he wrote: "In the path which Rockefeller had left were strewn ruined men and abandoned plants; before him lay an unquestioned control over tremendous sources of wealth."[48]

In those days Columbia professors, like David S. Muzzey, wrote in their textbooks: "In their absorbing passion for the accumulation of wealth, men were plundering the resources of the country like burglars looting a palace," and Smith College professors, like Harold U. Faulkner, recorded that, from the Spanish-American War to the First World War, "the colossal economic power of America became concentrated in the hands of a few capitalists," that this concentration "created a class more powerful than the people . . . which, often with utter unscrupulousness and disregard of the public welfare, played fast and loose with the nation's wealth."[49]

Monopoly Morality

Actually, even in the best days, bourgeois historians, as one would expect, barely scratched the surface in even chronicling the doings of the *plunderbund,* let alone examining these activities in terms of the exploitative character of capitalism. Brooks Adams, a soured bourgeois, said: "The only question which occupies the ruling class is whether it is cheaper to coerce or to bribe." "We've got the power, ain't we?" demanded "the public-be-

damned" Vanderbilt. "We are the rich," said Frederick Townsend Martin:

> We own America; we got it, God knows how, but we intend to keep it if we can by throwing all the tremendous weight of our support, our influence, our money, our political connections, our purchased senators, our hungry congressmen, our public-speaking demagogues into the scale against any legislature, any political platform, any presidential campaign that threatens the integrity of our estate.

There in Adams and Vanderbilt and Martin speak the creative heroes. And to observe their faces full, clear and unmasked watch them as they see the working class stir, as they see the real, the only creative heroes threatening to hold back a little of the monopolists' loot. Here is William Howard Taft—to be Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and President, surely not an obscure exemplar—writing to his wife, while he, a U.S. Circuit Judge is in Chicago in 1894. Judge Taft is there on official business in connection with the Pullman strike. He is supposed to be judiciously weighing the merits of the workers' behavior in the face of a sweeping anti-strike injunction. On July 4 the Judge writes home: "It is the most outrageous strike in the history of the country and ought to fail miserably." But the workers are stubborn. Writes the Judge on July 6: "It will be necessary for the military to kill some of the mob before the trouble can be stayed." The next day: "The situation in Chicago is very alarming and distressing and until they have much bloodletting, it will not be better. . . . Word comes tonight that thirty men have been killed by the federal troops. Though it is

bloody business, everybody hopes that it is true." The next day, July 8—alas! "The Chicago situation is not much improved. They have only killed six of the mob as yet. This is hardly enough to make an impression."[50] *

All this to Mrs. Taft at night. During the day the impartial, distinguished jurist sent leaders of the strike to jail for months. Again, as the organ of the New England textile owners, *Fibre and Fabric,* said during the great textile workers' organizing drive of 1929-30, "a few hundred funerals will have a quieting influence."[51]

There is the true face, the actual morality, of the New Historians' builders of America. It is a morality which reflects their class role—that of exploiters, not builders.

The Monopolists' Plunder

What of their plunder? The only way to describe the enormity of it is to say: *They have raped America.* Old Senator LaFollette told once what the lumber barons did to Wisconsin and this is but one gang of plunderers and one state:

> Wisconsin was one of the finest timber states in the United States. . . . They swept it off; they organized their lumber trust; they exploited the people of Wisconsin. We got very little benefit from their "development." They devastated the northern half of the State. . . . These great lumber corporations, enriched by the despoliation of our natural resources in Wisconsin, became the dictators of the public policy of the State.[52]

* In fact, on July 6, two workers were killed by U.S. Deputy Marshals (on the payroll of the Railroads!), and on July 7, the militia killed about 25 more. Some sixty workers were wounded.

What is true of one state is true of all. Wrote Albert Shaw, editor of the very respectable magazine of another generation, *Review of Reviews,* in 1907: ". . . there is not one of our states which has not, to a very considerable extent, come under the influence of this baneful system, by means of which the political life of the people is dominated and exploited for private ends by rich working corporations in alliance with professional party politicians."[53]

Writes Robert S. Allen, well-known columnist, over fifty years later:

> Everywhere, state government in the grip of minority or vested interests. . . . In Albany, an all-powerful insurance lobby cracks the whip; in Austin, it is done by insensate oil barons; in Harrisburg, by the Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association; in Little Rock, by the utilities. . . . Without exception, [state] legislatures, as a whole, are a shambles of mediocrity, incompetence, hooliganism, and venality. . . . Their annals are filled with . . . the squandering and pilfering of fabulous natural resources and rights.[54]

From the Federal government, its resources (that is, the resources of the American people as a whole) being greater than the states', the plundering and the appropriating by the monopolists have been proportionately greater. Bounties, subsidies, exemptions, tariffs—all legal gravy—bestowed upon the rugged individualists by the U.S. government certainly total billions upon billions of dollars. Public land grants to railroad corporations, by the Federal government, totalled over 130,000,000 acres (about the size of France); other grants of millions of acres went to canal and road-building companies. Though these grants were sup-

posed to exclude minerals, judicial opinion soon found that neither coal nor iron was a mineral!*

Jay Cooke, controlling the Northern Pacific Railroad—granted 47,000,000 acres by Congress—sent a man out to view his empire and report back. Wrote Cooke's emissary:

> There is nothing on the American continent equal to it. Such timber—such soil—such orchards—such fish—such climate—such coal—such harbors—such rivers. And the whole of it is but the western terminus of our railroad. . . . There is no end to the possibilities of wealth here. . . . Jay, we have got the biggest thing on earth. Our enterprise is an inexhaustible gold mine.[55]

This is but a fraction of the plunder. Add the exorbitant rates, the rebates, the dummy construction companies and their inflated costs, the watered stock (capitalization high for rate-making and stock-issuing), the faked assessments (to avoid taxes), and the miserably underpaid construction, maintenance and operating crews, plus the solid Jim Crow and one begins to understand the destructiveness, the anti-human essence of Big Business.

And all this is but one business. Name what other you will—oil, public utilities, coal, auto, steel, textiles, lumber—the essential story is the same: plunder, waste, destruction: individual appropriation and social exploitation.

Moreover, this represents normal, at-home, "creative"

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* As part of Big-Business revisionism, Robert S. Henry published an article on "The Railroad Land Grant Legend" in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (1945). We have used his figure of land granted rather than the conventional 150,000,000 acres. How the corporations have suffered!

activity. Add to this the wealth accruing from patriotic profit-making during the wars launched by the monopolists (corporate profits, as compared with the immediately preceding years *doubled* during the First World War; almost *tripled* during the Second World War and *doubled again* during the Korean War); and the special profits brought by investments overseas, due to the super-exploitation of colonial and semi-colonial peoples (typically profits from such investments are three to four times greater than from domestic investments) and the picture of the parasitism of Big Business on a world scale begins to fill out.

Characteristics—Not Blemishes

One who understands the reactionary essence of Big Business knows that the so-called blemishes and excesses and malpractices, of which even the apologists are ashamed, are, in fact, characteristic behavior patterns. It does not excuse Rockefeller, as Mr. Nevins appears to believe, to say that "he had to use the weapons and implements of his time." Rather, this condemns Rockefeller's *class* and Rockefeller himself. Rockefeller used, with great success, the weapons and implements of his class, in the era of monopoly capitalism, and that is why those implements and weapons—spying, violence, fraud, graft, etc.—are of such consequence. They are of the essence, of the function, the nature, of Big Business and not blemishes marring otherwise creative labors.

Chauncey Depew, the millionaire railroad lawyer of fifty years ago, thought he was defending his clients when he cried out: "Every manufacturer in the State of New

York existed by violence and lived by discrimination"*—that is, not only the railroad corporations. True: but the defense damns the system as it damns the particular capitalist.

Ida Tarbell dealt with the same points, and the Nevins defense, in her *History of the Standard Oil Company* first published fifty years ago. She wrote:

> Very often people who admit the facts, who are willing to see that Mr. Rockefeller has employed force and fraud to secure his ends, justify him by declaring, "It's business." . . . The methods it [Standard Oil] employs with such acumen, persistency, and secrecy are employed by all sorts of business men (II, pp. 287-88).

This, she said, obviously was no defense but she concluded, with the typical petty-bourgeois failing of the muckrakers, that reform of business was needed. While certain curbs on business excesses may be useful, business as such, conducted for private aggrandizement and based upon the exploitation of labor, is anti-social and its anti-social nature can no more be "reformed," than living creatures can cease breathing. The apologists for Big Business have a hopeless task: they are perfuming a dung heap.

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* One is reminded of the remark made by General David J. Crawford, commander of the tank-automotive center at Detroit during the Korean war, upon being *transferred* because he had accepted favors from Big Business contractors: "I did nothing that anyone else wouldn't have done—only someone caught me at it." (Quoted in *New Republic*, Aug. 6, 1951). The General was transferred—what happened to the patriotic, corrupting, "heroes of material growth"?

The "New" Historians and Imperialism

Lenin, it will be remembered, wrote of imperialism, "If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism, it would be defined as the monopoly stage of capitalism." He stressed "the indissoluble bond between imperialism and the trusts, and, therefore, between imperialism and the very foundations of capitalism." (*Imperialism,* chapter IX.)

It is true that in this connection the Big-Business historians do not have the major re-writing job that they have in glamorizing the monopolists. For though there has been some awareness, generally on a rudimentary level, of the imperialist nature of the U.S. ruling class during the past sixty years—witness the writings of Mark Twain, the activities of the Anti-Imperialist League, the denunciation of aggressions overseas coming from Negro leaders and organizations—the fact is that, aside from the Left, and, to a considerable degree, among Negroes, the American people generally tend to believe in the benevolence, on the international scene, of the American government.

In this sense, it is relatively easy for the Wall Street and State Department propagandists to palm off the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and the Eisenhower-Dulles "liberation" hoax as continuations of typical American generosity to foreign countries.

The Big-Business historians bank upon and use this popular, Wall-Street induced misconception. But they do not let it go at that. On the contrary, central to the apologetics of the Big-Business historians is an effort to dissociate completely American monopoly capitalism from the

unpleasantness of imperialism. This becomes all the more urgent since in the past there were to be found, at times, rather rank advocacy of imperialist adventures, stark confessions of imperialist intrigue and activity and, even from many bourgeois scholars, some recognition of the reality of U.S. imperialism.

Confessions of the Past

In the days of old, proposals for the penetration into or annexation of control over particular countries were frequently put in frankly imperialist terms. Thus, in 1898, an aspiring Republican politician from Indiana, Albert J. Beveridge (soon to be elevated to the U.S. Senate) told a wildly cheering audience of millionaires:

> American factories are making more than the American people can use; American soil is producing more than they can consume . . . the trade of the world must and shall be ours. And we will get it as our mother [England] has told us how . . . American law, American order, American civilization, and the American flag will plant themselves on shores hitherto bloody and benighted, but by those agencies of God henceforth to be made beautiful and bright.[56]

Stark was the confession of Major General Smedley D. Butler, of the Marine Corps, written in 1935, after over thirty years of active duty, as, in his words, "a racketeer for capitalism." General Butler spelled it out:

> I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City

> Bank boys to collect revenue in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. . . . In China in 1927 I helped see to it that the Standard Oil went its way unmolested.[57]

A generation ago some bourgeois historians acknowledged the existence of American imperialism. Good examples of this are the works of Professors Parker T. Moon (*Imperialism and World Politics,* 1927) and Benjamin H. Williams (*Economic Foreign Policy of the United States,* 1929, etc.) In 1930 Professor Muzzey was not a man marked as a Soviet agent for denouncing "the poison of 'Yankee imperialism' which has been administered in Santo Domingo, Haiti, Nicaragua, Cuba and other regions of the Caribbean . . . for the protection of financial and industrial interests."[58]

Indeed, in the thirties, Mr. Nevins, writing of Grover Cleveland, permitted himself to entitle one of his chapters "Hawaii and American Imperialism," so that he at least recognized the phenomenon. And from 1928 to 1935 there appeared a series of volumes, commercially produced, entitled *Studies in American Imperialism,* which included separate works on Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Central America, Bolivia, and Colombia. These books were not, of course, Marxist-Leninist exposures of the actual nature of American imperialism, but they did admit the existence of that imperialism.

Today all this will not do; must, in fact, be undone. One is reminded of Marx's comment: ". . . the greater the development of antagonisms between the growing forces of production and the extant social order, the more

does the ideology of the ruling class become permeated with hypocrisy . . . the more does the language used by the dominant class become sublime and virtuous."

American imperialism has been wafted out of existence, in the latest history books. In this Rockefeller epoch, an American history professor, Dwight Lowell Dumond, will write a book entitled *America in Our Time 1896-1946* (Holt, N. Y., 1947) and will devote neither section nor page nor paragraph to American imperialism. He mentions *German* imperialism and finds the alleged desire of the United States to protect peoples "against the imperialistic ambitions of *other* nations" an important reason for "our unwillingness to shirk a responsibility" and even appropriate the territory of the peoples "we" are "protecting," but this, of course, is American idealism, not imperialism! Another history professor, Julius W. Pratt, produces a stout volume, delicately entitled *America's Colonial Experiment* (Prentice Hall, N. Y., 1950) dedicated to the proposition that American imperialism was especially benign and, in any case, is obsolete.

Under the editorial guidance of Nevins himself, another history professor, Harold U. Faulkner, writes a book entitled *From Versailles to the New Deal* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1951) where the whole record of American imperialism from 1919 to 1932 is miraculously telescoped into this coy sentence: "In the little Caribbean nations dollar diplomacy operated with the same misguided efficiency under the new Administration [of Harding] as it had under Democrats and Republicans alike in earlier years" (p. 61).

Mr. Nevins and U.S. Imperialism

The master himself, Prof. Nevins, produced a volume called *The United States in a Chaotic World,* subtitled *A Chronicle of International Affairs, 1918-1933* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1950) in which, although occasional "blemishes" are gingerly noted, the dirty phrase, American imperialism, nowhere appears. On the contrary, with his customary boldness in an ignoble cause, Mr. Nevins finds "American foreign policy toward Latin America [to] have been friendly and helpful," and even "unruly little Nicaragua" benefited from the prolonged visits of U.S. land, naval and air forces—"efficiency and tact" were characteristic and the country was "far more peaceful and industrious" because of them (pp. 22, 213). Elsewhere Mr. Nevins generalizes his exoneration of American imperialis. It "has been almost completely abolished," he writes, "and where it exists it has taken on a greatly improved character" (*N. Y. Times Magazine,* May 2, 1948).

It should surprise no one then, that when Mr. Nevins contributes an article to the *New York Times Magazine* (Feb. 23, 1947) on the subject of excessive nationalism in textbooks he finds those of Latin America particularly faulty because their handling of "the Mexican War, the seizure of Panama, the Platt Amendment, the occupation of Haiti, and Yankee imperialism in general even yet leave something to be desired." And as an additional object lesson in the overcoming of nationalism Mr. Nevins reports that the best textbooks in the world—those "probably freer from bias than any others" are in—can you guess?—the United States!—and, nobly adds the internationalist, England and Scandinavia.

In his 1951 speech before the Society of American Archivists, Mr. Nevins really spelled out the meaning of his Big-Business history writing in terms of American imperialism. "America," he found, "has been projected into world leadership." "All kinds of Western institutions and virtues now find their principal stronghold in the United States." The Atlantic was the center of world civilization today "as the Mediterranean was the center of the ancient world." And who made this America? The Morgans and Fords. But if this America leads the world, if it is the stronghold of Western institutions and virtues, is it not then a fact that the Morgans and Fords are the creators and saviors not only of the United States, but of civilization?

Yes, this and nothing less. These men, says Nevins, were, indeed, the "builders . . . of a strength which civilization found indispensable." Here is NATO in history-writing. Here is the foreign policy of Eisenhower-Dulles—to turn the countries of Western Europe into bases for American bombers, into mobilization grounds for the assemblage of their youth as cannon-fodder in a new world slaughter—put into terms of historical interpretation. Making Morgan and Ford the creators and saviors of America, certainly requires a re-writing of American history. And if they were the creators and saviors of civilization, does this not require that the French rewrite their history, and the Italians their history, and the English their history, etc., etc.?*

* The editors of *Fortune* magazine (Sept. 1951) expressed concern that Mr. Nevins would permit his crusading zeal to exaggerate the role of Big Business! They welcomed, of course, his "correction" of American history, but added: "We hope it does not turn out to be overcorrection.

In character, for his current role, is the manner in which Mr. Nevins handles imperialism in his four volumes on John D. Rockefeller. He leaves it out—of both editions. He tells us that the export trade was very important to the Standard Oil Company and that foreign sources of supply were important, too. But he finds it "obviously [?] impossible to give more than a brief sketch" of this foreign aspect of the oil business. The sketch consists in naming some companies acquired by Standard throughout the world and some lovely prose about the "many romantic aspects" of the foreign trade and investments—"coolies," "ox carts" and all that (Chapter 28 of the 1940 edition; Chapter 26 of the 1953 edition).

Of course a crude soldier such as General Butler saw other aspects in Mexico and in China. Of course, right after World War I, Sir Walter Tyrell from his vantage point as permanent head of the British Foreign Office remarked that "Washington began to think, talk and write like Standard Oil officials." Of course two scholars writing in 1924 found that "the United States had a foreign policy in oil identical with the policy of Standard Oil." Of course two other scholars report later that American "diplomatic actions have been so vigorous in furthering our interest in the acquisition of foreign oil reserves that they appear to go beyond the normal activities in the enforcement of our general commercial policy."[59] But of what relevance is all this to the story of Rockefeller and the Standard Oil Trust

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. . . Let us hope the penitent historians will be accurate as well as charitable." The same call for restraint is the point made by Prof. V. D. Bornet of Stanford, in "Those 'Robber Barons'" in *The Western Political Quarterly*, June, 1953.

—especially when "many romantic aspects" intrude?

As for the "coolies"—one doesn't have to ask what *they* think about Standard Oil. History records that—despite Mr. Nevins, and Standard Oil!

The Subtle Approach

A more subtle defense of imperialism than omission is coming to the fore now. It finds bald exposition in the work of the very influential Reinhold Niebuhr. Mr. Niebuhr finds it more illuminating to refer to the colonial world as "the non-industrial" or the "non-technical" world. He finds that nations of that world "held in tutelage" [!] by the industrial or technical nations become "obsessed with the idea that all of their ills flow from the imperial occupation." This is quite absurd, we learn. The ills in the "non-industrial" world flow from—non-industrialization! It is "the low efficiency" of such an economy which produces the people's poverty.[60]

You tear out a man's tongue and then explain that his dumbness is his own fault—the man is tongueless! Imperialists conquer peoples; turn their lands into dungeons; prevent industrialization; shore up all feudal and native reactionary elements; distort the whole economy by forcing concentration on particular cash crops or strategic minerals; super-exploit the colonial working population; grow sleek and fat on the wealth robbed from the colonies, and then—shame on you non-technical and non-industrial peoples for your "backwardness!" This is some more of Big Business' "miracles of material accomplishment!"

America's "Less Costly" Industrialization

A final point on the Big-Business thesis. Mr. Nevins insists, as we have seen, that industrialization here has been less costly, "far less" costly, than in the Soviet Union and this he says redounds further to the glory of his tycoons.

We reply: 1) Your precious monopolists were parasitic, not creative. This country grew to the might it now has because of its colossal resources and size, because of its distance from interminable, destructive wars and because of the creative labors of those who, inside the country and within its colonial empire, produce the good and useful and beautiful.

2) The costs of industrialization in the United States, because of the exploitation by the monopolists, have been very great, indeed. The American scholar, Lester Ward, touched on some of these costs, back in the infancy of imperialism. In 1893, writing of the malevolence of capitalism, he said:

> The underpaid labor, the prolonged and groveling drudgery, the wasted strength, the misery and squalor, the diseases resulting and the premature deaths that would be prevented by a just distribution of the products of labor, would in a single year outweigh all the so-called crime of a century.[61]

What shall one say now, seventy years later, four depressions later, four wars later? Ward does not include the agony of unemployment, or the horror of war. He does not refer to white supremacy and the crucifixion of the Negro people, nor to the slaughter of the innocents—at

glorious profits—from the "pacification" of the Philippines to the "police action" in Korea!

3) The industrialization of the U.S.S.R. has cost much, very much work and much, very much hardship. But it is not the people's labor that was burdensome, even though it was difficult; labor for oneself and not the boss and the landlord, such labor may be strenuous but it is sweet. The costs in the building of an industrialized U.S.S.R. were levied by the capitalists of Russia and the world, not least of the United States. It is their boycotts, their interventions, their wars, which have made the job costly. But withal, the rate of industrialization of the socialist U.S.S.R. has been very much more rapid —six times more rapid from 1929 through 1951, than was that of the United States, most powerful of capitalist states, according to the United Nations *Statistical Yearbook of* 1953. This is why the *New Statesman and Nation* in London (August 15, 1953) is worried about "The Soviet Challenge," *i.e.,* "the rise of Soviet economic strength," and why a leading Fabian, T. Balogh, writes on "Russia's E-Bomb: The Real Threat is Economic" in the N. Y. *Nation* (November 14, 1953), and why the *N. Y. Times* (November 23, 1953) headlines "High U.S. Officials Warned on Rising Soviet Bloc Output" and reports that "the industrial production of the U.S.S.R. is growing much more rapidly than that of the United States." This less than a decade after much of the Soviet Union was devastated by war, while the industry of the United States grew fat on the same war!

In fact, Mr. Nevins himself saw more clearly, in the past, on this question of U.S.S.R. industrialization than he does

at this moment. During the warm days of the Second World War, Mr. Nevins delivered an address at a dinner given in his honor. In the course of it he made reference to the Axis foe and saw in the rise of fascism the lesson that degrading a people may be more quickly accomplished than uplifting them. Yet, he continued, grand examples of uplift do exist. Yes, he said, history demonstrates that "rapid upward change is possible." And what was the most striking example of "rapid upward change" that Mr. Nevins then could conjure up? Here is the answer, in his own words:

> Lenin and Stalin proved that Russia, the most ignorant, ill-organized, and impoverished of the great Powers, could be largely remade in a generation; carrying that teeming amorphous country not merely through a political revolution . . . but through an *industrial revolution*—which it had taken older lands a century to accomplish [italics in original].[62]

Well put, Mr. Nevins.

Marxism-Leninism and Capitalism's "Creativity"

Marxism-Leninism teaches that capitalism, as compared with chattel slavery and feudalism, was progressive because it led to a great forward movement of productive forces, and because it created its antagonist and successor, the working class, whose own liberation brings about the liberation of all humanity.

But even in capitalism's progressive stage—prior to monopoly, prior to imperialism, when decaying capitalism personifies "reaction all along the line"—the seeds of decay

are present. Even in capitalism's progressive stage, when the nature of the system leads it to "create more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together"—as Marx and Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*—capitalism remains an exploitative system, a system in which the minute ruling class, possessing the means of production, enriches itself from the only real source of social creativity—human labor.

This is why Marx and Engels while demonstrating the relatively progressive character of capitalism in its pre-monopoly stage—declaring in the *Manifesto* that "the bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part"—state in the same work that "for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it [the bourgeoisie] has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation."

There is, of course, no more passionate excoriation of capitalism than that in Marx's *Capital,* published in 1867. Studying capitalism's "idyllic methods of primary accumulation," its "system of ruthless terrorism"—the theft of common lands, the spoliation of church property, the stealing of State domains, the rape of colonial lands, the African slave trade—Marx concludes, in the classic phrase: ". . . capital comes into the world soiled with mire from top to toe, and oozing blood from every pore."

And with capitalism in the saddle, Marx writes in *Capital,* the bourgeoisie loses "the last vestiges of shame and conscience," and "everywhere" its order "constitutes a system of plunder." Of the capitalist's relation to the worker, Marx says, ". . . the creature sucking his blood will not loose its hold [then quoting Engels] 'so long as there is a muscle, nerve, a drop of blood to be exploited.' "

America's foremost Marxist, William Z. Foster, writes of capitalism with equal passion: "Capitalism," he says in his *Outline Political History of the Americas,* "socially irresponsible, is essentially a gangster system of society" (p. 107).

With precise historical accuracy, he describes the bourgeoisie when on the make, in the days of Mark Twain's *Gilded Age*: "The capitalists were like ravenous wolves, seizing and taking for their own the vast bulk of the country and its splendid resources. . . . By the same token, the big capitalists considered the mass of workers and farmers to be god-given slaves, to be exploited to the last limit." They were, he says, "the most notorious aggregation of crooks, money-grabbers, land speculators, invention-stealers, and political bribers in the history of world capitalism" (pp. 232-33).

As for imperialists in general, and American imperialists in particular—and they rule today, and it is they whom the Big-Business historians serve—of them Lenin wrote, in August, 1918, in his famous *Letter to American Workers*:

> The American billionaires . . . have plundered hundreds of billions of dollars. And every dollar is stained with filth: filthy secret pacts. . . . Every dollar is stained with the filth of "profitable" military deliveries enriching the rich and despoiling the poor. . . . And every dollar is stained with blood—of that sea of blood which was shed by the ten millions killed and twenty millions maimed in the great, noble, liberating and holy war. . . .

This is what Marxism-Leninism teaches, and this is the truth, concerning Mr. Nevins' "heroes of material growth."

The Big-Business historians are attempting to re-write the history of our country at a time when Big Business,

trying to overcome the growing crisis in all its policies, endeavors to "take away" from the people their remaining rights and safeguards, national resources and enterprises. The function of the Big-Business historian is to help in this ravishment.

The job of rehabilitating the reputation and moral status of Big Business by wiping out the popular anti-monopoly tradition is a necessary ideological step in this undertaking. It goes hand in hand with what Stalin described, in his speech at the XIX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as the increased subordination of the state to monopoly capitalism.

The historians are trying to do this in two ways: 1) They seek to transform the monopolists from what they have been and are—an anti-democratic, parasitic class of exploiters, looters and war-makers—into a noble band of rough-and-ready, but supremely efficient, builders and guardians of our country's economic strength. 2) They seek to show that the militant anti-monopoly tradition in American history was fatuous, anti-historic and really reactionary. They would make of this anti-monopoly tradition a tremendous mistake, an obstacle to progress.

In terms of today's scene, the effort is to tear away from the people the still vital traditions of the New Deal. Such an assault seeks to justify the theft of all the social security and welfare gains made through the people's struggles during the New Deal. Clearly, also, such robbery means the turning over to the "creative monopolists," the New Deal's T.V.A., the whole Atomic Energy industrial development, the off-shore oil resources, and everything else not yet completely theirs.*

During the New Deal the masses, in every phase of their great struggles for unionization, for jobs, for Negro rights,

for democratic advance, for peace, faced the relentless opposition of the monopolists. And they felt their own strength, its irresistible nature, as they became organized and conscious of their aims.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in his historic state paper of April, 1938, "Recommendations to the Congress to Curb the Monopolies and the Concentration of Economic Power," was giving expression to this growing understanding of the American people:

> . . . the liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to a point where it becomes stronger than their democratic state itself. That, in its essence, is fascism. . . .

And President Roosevelt, though committed, of course, basically to the system of capitalism, went on to say: "Among us today a concentration of power without equal in history is growing." He said, "our liberties are in danger," and he pointed to its source: "That danger comes from that concentrated private power which is struggling so hard to master our democratic government."

The Big-Business historians seek above everything else to destroy this New Deal tradition and the strength it still retains among the masses. This is why they not only glorify the tycoons, but also belittle the masses. This is why Nevins, for example, repeatedly refers to "the thoughtless masses" or uses some similar expression of the same idea: the masses as stupid, apathetic, ineffective,

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• A very recent instance: The *N. Y. Times,* Dec. 10, 1953, reports that the Assistant Secretary of the Interior said he hoped it would soon be possible to turn over to private hands remaining federally-owned forests. The nation's development, he declared, "has come about by the passing of certain of our lands into private hands." He wants to complete the job right away. For a good account of the Eisenhower "give-away" program, see Harry Levine, "Here is the Score," in *The Nation,* January 16, 1954.

sheep-like.[63] This slanderous picturization of the masses* is as false as is the glamorous transformation of the monopolists.

"I know nothing more rare," wrote Walt Whitman, in *Democratic Vistas,* "than a fit scientific estimate and reverent appreciation of the People—of their measureless wealth of latent power and capacity." The forward-looking and democratic features of American history are due to the harnessing of that power, the expression of that capacity on the part of the masses—"the unnamed, unknown rank and file," in Whitman's words. Advances have come only because the masses fought for them—this is a fundamental lesson of the history of our country, and never was this central truth demonstrated more clearly than in the days of the New Deal.

Big Business Historians Will Fail

But despite great efforts the Big-Business historians cannot give their masters a guarantee that they will succeed.

The fact is that, coincident with the fight back against McCarthyism and reaction that is so evident everywhere today in American life, there is a developing resistance among historians to the Nevins-Hacker Big-Business travesty on American history. This resistance comes not only from independent historians—like Harvey O'Connor, Matthew Josephson** and Leo Huberman—who have always

* Carl L. Shipley, past president of the Young Republicans of the District of Columbia, and a member of the Republican state committee of the District, finds democracy a delusive aim. "The common man," he says, "was a hell of a failure. . . . All this erasing of class and social differences, things like the FEPC—they just didn't work"—quoted by W. V. Shannon in the *N. Y. Post,* January 20, 1954.

** After this work was in type, Mr. Josephson contributed a sharp attack upon the Nevins revisionism in the *Saturday Review,* Feb. 6, 1954.

had to function outside the academic fold—but also from professional historians in the academic world. Outstanding in this connection have been the recent statements by two leading professors of American history—Howard K. Beale of the University of Wisconsin, and Henry Steele Commager of Columbia University. In calling attention to these contributions, we are pointing only to the evidence of the fresh breezes which accumulate on every hand,* destined to help clear the air of the Big-Business idolatry.

Professor Beale, reading a paper on "The Professional Historian: His Theory and Practice" at a dinner of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, made a generally positive contribution to the whole struggle against reaction. His call was for honesty and decency and scholarship, and above all, he pleaded: "We must unitedly resist those who would try to dictate what we teach and what we write." He attacked, by name, the witch-hunters, McCarthy and McCarran, and, in the field of historical inquiry, called for a more sympathetic approach to the battles of the working class and a conscious struggle against white supremacist thinking and behavior which, he very correctly stated, filled the American professional historians' guild. And he explicitly rejected, by name, Professor Nevins' recent eulogies of Big Business.[64]

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* As additional examples, from the world of books, may be mentioned three recent volumes—all published by small concerns: *Giant Business; Threat to Democracy*, by T. K. Quinn (Exposition Press, N. Y., 1953); *Monopoly and Social Control*, by Henry A. Wells (Public Affairs Press, Washington, 1952); and *Business Be Damned*, by Elijah Jordan (Schuman, N. Y., 1952). The first two are New Dealish; the third is a repetition of the arguments of Thorstein Veblen.

Professor Commager's article, "Guilt—and Innocence—By Association," appearing in the *New York Times Magazine* (Nov. 8, 1953) is an historic document. Its creation, and its publication, are signal marks of the mounting resistance to McCarthyism. Its democratic spirit is in direct conflict with the Nevins line of the ennoblement of Big Business, although not yet an explicit recognition that it is indeed Big Business which threatens democracy. That one of the leading figures among American academic historians should at this time come forward so forcefully in the cause of democracy is a harbinger of the rejection of Big-Business history writing so certain to accompany the American people's rejection of Big-Business rule in their striving and forward movement toward independent political action.

Our country's greatness comes from the work of the masses who made the land fruitful and the machines produce. What it has been is as nothing compared with what it will be when these masses really own and govern their country.

We close, as we opened, with the words of the New England carpenter and trade-union leader of another century, Seth Luther:

> And although wealth, and prejudice, and slander and abuse, are all brought to bear on us, we have one consolation—*We are* the majority. . . . Our cause is the cause of truth—of justice and humanity. *It must prevail.* Let us be determined no longer to be deceived by the cry of those who produce *nothing* and who enjoy *all.*

II. THE "NEW CONSERVATIVES"*

In reviewing *Scaramouche,* a recent Hollywood product, *Variety,* the leading trade journal of the entertainment industry, remarked: "The highly complex Sabatini plot has been greatly simplified for present purposes. It finds the French Revolution all but eliminated from the story, because of the inevitable Red analogy were the hero allowed to spout the 1789 theme of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'."

It is this "embarrassment" that formed a central feature of the last public speech of Joseph Stalin. Addressing the XIX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, he pointed out that capitalism, having reached its last stage, that of imperialism, had thrown overboard "the banner of bourgeois-democratic freedoms." No one remained to pick it up, said Stalin, except "the Communist and democratic parties," and they, by picking it up, would "rally around themselves the majority of the people." In doing this, in preserving and extending democratic freedoms against the assaults of the billionaires, the Communists and other democratic forces, supported by the broadest masses, would be defending national independence and would be preventing a world-wide holocaust.

* This section was originally published in *Masses & Mainstream* (April, 1953), shortly after the death of Joseph Stalin.

Stalin, himself, as Malenkov said at his bier, "gave his life in the cause of freeing mankind from exterminating wars, in the cause of the struggle for a free and happy life on earth for toiling man."

All Marxist-Leninist writing is filled with expressions of the thought that the culmination of the democratic struggle is the achievement of Socialism. As William Z. Foster wrote in 1945: "The very foundation of Marxism-Leninism is that the working class, with the Communist Party at its head, leads the democratic masses of the people in the amelioration of their conditions under capitalism and also in the eventual establishment of Socialism."

But what Stalin especially emphasized was that, in this time of the intensified general crisis of capitalism, the imperialists have abandoned bourgeois democracy. He pointed particularly to the total nature of their repudiation of the political and philosophical principles which had been developed by their class ancestors, when the bourgeoisie was leading revolutionary efforts against feudalism and for national liberation.

Stalin's findings in this respect have particular applicability to the United States, since it is the imperialists of our country who constitute the main bulwark of world reaction, the main source of the war danger. Let us consider one area: What has been the dominant trend, within the recent past, in political and historical thinking in American academic circles?

Repudiating Democracy

The trend has been one of increasingly open repudiation of democratic axioms. More and more explicitly abandoned are such ideas as the duty and propriety of pursuing happiness for oneself and one's children, the equality

of mankind, the social efficacy of reason, the validity of science, the reality of causation, the possibility of progress. Back of it all, in ideological terms, has been a growing insistence upon humanity's innate and ineradicable rottenness or sinfulness or incapacity, so that to think the masses capable of governing is to be naive, and to see in life anything but a snare and a delusion is to be a fool.

This is the academic fertilizer nourishing the intended end-products of the commercialized mass media—sadism, salaciousness, and cynicism—so that to be "smart" means to get yours while you can and the devil take the hindmost, to be "smart" means to kick the other fellow in the teeth, hard, so that the gold fillings fall out and you may pocket them.

There has been a Niagara of works from professional pens resuscitating and refurbishing so-called Conservative thinking. This, as it was somewhat plaintively put by Professor Francis Graham Wilson, "is the only answer we have today to the corrosive doctrine of the class struggle." Mr. Wilson's remark occurs in a book published by the University of Washington and entitled, characteristically, *The Case for Conservatism.*

The extent of this outpouring may be indicated simply by citing recent titles. Peter Viereck, a history professor at Smith College and a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, offers *Conservatism Revisited.* New York University produces *Conservatism in Early American History,* by Leonard W. Labaree; Harvard publishes *American Conservatism in the Age of Enterprise* by Robert G. McCloskey; and Columbia issues *American Conservatives: The Political Thought of Francis Lieber and John W. Burgess,* by Bernard E. Brown.

Robert A. Nisbet, of the University of California, dis-

cusses "Conservatism and Sociology" in *The American Journal of Sociology* (Sept. 1952) and finds that while, in the past, "the principal interests of American sociologists lay in the study of *change* . . . today we plainly find a radically different orientation." Today, he writes, "The major orientation is not change but *order.*" Indeed, another professor, F. E. Dessauer, produces a volume starkly called *Stability,* a desirable condition since "the scales are weighted against progress when men are frightened and tired."

Frequently, the cudgels for "conservatism" are taken up with a show of bravado—a show necessary because of conservatism's malodorousness in the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence. Thus, Professor Raymond English, of Kenyon College, writes of "Conservatism: The Forbidden Faith" in *The American Scholar* (Autumn, 1952) and argues that the insistence upon liberalistic demagogy (his own language is more euphonious and circuitous) becomes increasingly foolhardy since it "betrays a lack of political sophistication that can be dangerous in a time when America has to assume unprecedently great political responsibilities."

Imperialism's New "Heroes"

The abandonment of bourgeois democracy is shown also in the new kind of "heroes" attracting American academicians. Among the favorites is John C. Calhoun, called by Frederick Douglass (definitely *not* one of their heroes!) "the great champion of human bondage." This champion of bondage receives a two-volume biography by Charles M. Wiltse, a best-selling glorification by Margaret L. Coit, and specialized investigations—*Calhoun*:

Basic Documents, by John M. Anderson, and *Political Theory of John C. Calhoun* by August O. Spain. Mr. Spain provides Calhoun, as he writes, with "a more favorable estimate than that heretofore accepted." Especially admirable to Professor Spain—reflecting "courage and stoic determination"—is Calhoun's rejection of the Declaration of Independence—"anarchical" was Calhoun's devastating description.

Calhoun's own hero was Edmund Burke—"the wisest of modern statesmen," he called him. The American imperialist academicians agree. Burke is a man after their own hearts, a man described by Karl Marx, in *Capital,* as an "execrable political cantmonger . . . a sycophant."* It was Burke who wrote: "The laws of commerce are the laws of nature, and therefore the laws of God"—which would appear to make capitalism secure enough—on paper!

Yale University publishes *Our Eminent Friend Edmund Burke* by T. W. Copeland, while Knopf issues extended selections from his writings, *Burke's Politics,* edited by Ross Hoffman and Paul Levack. Professor Crane Brinton, of Harvard, embarrassed as is the *Variety* scribbler with "the 1789 theme," finds Burke especially helpful on that point. For he thinks that Burke "confronted in the French Revolution the kind of challenge we have confronted and still confront in the totalitarian revolutions of our day." He feels that Burke successfully met that challenge, and that his debate with Thomas Paine over the values of that Revolution "has been decided in favor of Burke." Wherefore, "Burke is the best teacher available for some of the political lessons we Americans must

* Marx added: ". . . it is our bounden duty again and again to stigmatize the Burkes, whose only difference from their successors was that they had talent!"

learn"—thus showing that reaction's cold terror invigorates the summer soldiers!

Another recent hero is Count Metternich, the focus of Viereck's *Conservatism Revisited.* He is the guide, the model, the civilized statesman. Viereck's hero was for half a century Chancellor and Foreign Minister of the Austro-Hungarian Empire when, in the words of that Communist organ, the *Encyclopedia Britanica,* that Empire was marked by "an incredibly reactionary and aggressive regime." And during this period, says the same subversive source, Viereck's hero "busied himself in repressing liberty." To Metternich the French Revolution was "the gangrene which must be burnt out with the hot iron, the hydra with jaws open to swallow the social order," while the United States had "in their indecent declarations . . . cast blame and scorn on the institutions of Europe most worthy of respect." Moreover, their "evil doctrines and pernicious examples" seriously threatened "our religious and political institutions . . . and the conservative system which has saved Europe." When, in 1848, the people of Europe became sufficiently tired of Metternich's salvation they sent him packing. Viereck welcomes his ghost while Washington welcomes, in the flesh, similarly discarded latter-day Metternichs!

Metternich's Imperial Master, called — by the court jester, no doubt—Francis the Good, likewise finds a glorifier. While the Minister is hailed by a Professor, the Emperor is adorned by a President—Walter C. Langsam, of Wagner College. President Langsam reports, after laborious research, that the Emperor had "kindly but sharp eyes, neatly combed hair, and measured step." In addition to combing his hair and measuring his step, the Emperor was a strict disciplinarian, though he "often intervened to

soften penalties, at least in non-political cases." What virtues the new gods have!

The Adams Cult

Two more special heroes of the Voice-of-America professors may be mentioned—the Adams brothers, Brooks and Henry. Again the newly-published volumes, not to speak of articles, approach library proportions. On Henry, within the last five years, we have, in chronological order, Harold Cater, *Henry Adams and His Friends,* Ernest Samuels, *The Young Henry Adams,* Max Baym, *The French Education of Henry Adams,* Robert Hume, *Runaway Star*: *An Appreciation of Henry Adams,* and William Jordy, *Henry Adams*: *Scientific Historian.* Harvard, Yale, Cornell, and Columbia Presses contributed to the production of these volumes. In the case of Brooks, his two main works, *The Law of Civilization and Decay,* and *America's Economic Supremacy,* have been reprinted recently, with elaborate forewords by Charles A. Beard and Marquis Childs, and Cornell University has just issued Thornton Anderson's biographical study: *Brooks Adams —Constructive Conservative.*

What is so attractive in these two men are their nobly "conservative" views. Beard sees in Brooks, "pessimism in respect of the Enlightenment, Progress, and Civilization"; Jordy notes Henry's intense preoccupation with death and insanity, his profound pessimism, and his insistence on "human impotence in the face of powers too vast for its coping."

Both were Anglo-Saxon and male supremacists to the core. Both were anti-Semitic, and both were ardent supporters of imperialism. Brooks boasted: "I am an expansionist, an imperialist," and yearned for history's "cul-

mination"—as he called it—"the world at our feet." Both glorified war: "Peace I take to be a sign of decline, always. War is a sign of advance." In the schools they wanted "obedience, duty, and self-sacrifice taught," for "an appeal to reason" was, in fact, "an appeal to chaos." Indeed, "the universe is a chaos [and] man is doomed eternally and hopelessly." "Eternally and hopelessly"? Well, perhaps not entirely, for in a lighter vein Brooks remarked: "Everything is to be cured by a concentration of power in some one who really will protect the whole community."

Such philosophical precursors of fascism induce today's rapture. Beard took fifty pages to introduce one of Brooks Adams' "striking" books; Jordy finds Henry "narrow about Jews" (!) but otherwise provocative and brilliant, etc., while Anderson says, rather cryptically, of Brooks' anti-Semitism, that he "undoubtedly had that prejudice," but his own over-all conclusion is that "he left a body of insights and suggestions which become more acceptable as time goes by."

"Like Fish-Meal for Soil Food"

The anti-humanist essence of the "New Conservatism" is a variation on the theme expressed by the poet Robinson Jeffers:

> *I think the whole human race ought to be scrapped,*
> *and is*
> *on the way to it; ground like fish-meal for soil food.*

The servants must deny humanity since the masters would destroy it.

One of the ideological fountain-heads of reactionary reasoning today is Reinhold Niebuhr. Scarcely a work in non-fiction issues from a university or general commercial publisher today that does not acknowledge special obligation to the thinking of the Dean of the Faculty and Pro-

fessor of Applied Christianity at Union Theological Seminary.

The heart of Niebuhr's position, reiterated most recently in his *The Irony of American History* (Scribners), is the secularization of the doctrine of original sin. It is man's ineradicably evil nature which makes inevitable and interminable his suffering; and it is man's persistence in denying or ignoring his nature—as demonstrated by his stubborn efforts to eliminate the suffering—which is the fundamental expression of this sinfulness. Therefore, contrition alone is the way to "salvation." Or, as Niebuhr puts it: "Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by faith." Elsewhere, he is even more explicit*: ". . . most of the evils of life arise from the fact that man seeks frantically to establish absolute security by his power, wisdom, or virtue."

Such a position is, of course, anti-rational and anti-scientific; it leads inevitably to a conviction of the impossibility of piercing, as Niebuhr phrases it, "the baffling configurations of history" which are simply beyond the ken of "any scheme of rational intelligibility."

And such a position, clearly, is anti-democratic. It denies the whole core of the Enlightenment, the whole essence of the English and American and French Revolutions, not to speak of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The attack is directed against *The Communist Manifesto,* but it is directed also against the Declaration of Independence.

In exactly the same way, and the debt is acknowledged, Viereck revisits "Conservatism," because he finds that "every human being is by nature barbarous," because as he repeats, with marked lack of originality, in his *Shame*

* This occurs in Niebuhr's essay in A. D. Ward, ed., *Goals of Economic Life,* published by Harper in 1953 for the Federal Council of Churches.

and Glory of the Intellectuals (Beacon), "Every human being is a cave man by nature."

Again, Will Herberg, renegade from Communism and now David Dubinsky's educational director, in his *Judaism and Modern Man,* finds that "man is the problem." The difficulty is "the chaos and evil in the heart of man," and "there is no hope so long as he continues to believe that he can save himself." It is, therefore, an illusion to seek for relief in material change. Indeed, such a search is the essence of sin—"the self-defeating, self-destroying dynamic of human life conceived in its own terms."

All this, too, is the guts of Whittaker Chambers' *Witness,** so lavishly press-agented by the imperialists, and given the Tamiment Book Award by the Social Democrats. "The concentrated evil of our time," wrote its embodiment, was the effort, through intelligence, reason and science, "to end the bloody meaninglessness of man's history." Blasphemous it is, to this blasphemer of humanity, to seek "abundance, security, peace . . . the vision of materialism."

This is the main mode of the attack upon reason and democracy and mankind at the moment. There are others, of course. Thus, the Freudian twist is prevalent and serves as another dead-end for social effort. For example, Arnold Toynbee: "The heart of our difficulty is the difference in pace between the hare-swift movement of the scientific intellect, which can revolutionize our technology within the span of a single lifetime, and the tortoise-slow movement of the subconscious underbelly of the human psyche, which knows no change or shadow of turning and is the same yesterday, today and forever" (*Atlantic Monthly,* Jan. 1953).

* See the extended and excellent critique of this book by Milton Howard in *M&M,* July, 1952.

Similarly, the eclectic approach in which, since everything is cause to everything else and the effectiveness of the innumerable "causes" cannot be measured, and so many causes are not even known, one actually eliminates cause. Thus, Werner Levi, in *Fundamentals of World Organization,* writes: "Peace is determined by biological, psychological, political, economic, social, cultural, ideological, metaphysical, military, institutional, technological, and probably many other factors, whose effect is modified by any number of combinations between them and their position in time and space." The reader who survives that sentence will be uncertain of his position in time and space but he will be sure, if he takes its message seriously, that to struggle for peace is manifestly useless.

The heroes and the arguments will sound painfully familiar to all students of fascism. Mussolini wrote that "fascism denies in democracy the absurd conventional untruth of political equality . . . and the myth of 'happiness' and indefinite progress"; and Hitler saw "democracy as the canal through which bolshevism lets its poison flow."

The Nazis had their intellectuals, too. One, von Srbik, was the author of a very full and laudatory biography of Metternich, basic to Viereck's briefer encomium. Others revisited Conservatism, also. Thus, Hermann Rauschning, Nazi President of Danzig, called his book *The Conservative Revolution.* This also celebrated Metternich and urged the need of "liquidating the doctrines [of] rationalism, and liberalism, and socialism." There was no basis, he wrote, for "optimism concerning human nature" and the beginning of wisdom was an appreciation of the essential foulness of that human nature.

The Voice-of-America intellectuals, like their Nazi and fascist predecessors, do not stop merely at lamenting the terribly evil nature of man. They, too, seek the "liquida-

tion of rationalism, liberalism and socialism," because they, too, seek to sustain, philosophically, a senile and truly inhuman social order.

They, too, write, as for example, did Dwight MacDonald—a former editor of *Fortune* and *Partisan Review*—that "clearly, modern liberalism has something in common with messianic totalitarianism" (*New Republic,* Nov. 14, 1949); or Raymond English, that, "Socialism is a legitimate offspring of the liberal heresy" (*American Scholar,* Autumn, 1952); or William Barrett, that, "The liberal mind, as we have known it in recent politics, has been the Stalinist or Stalinized mind," wherefore, since "the fundamental attitudes of liberalism are the subject of our criticism, ought we not to push our inquiry to its historical source and question the Enlightenment itself?" (*Partisan Review,* March, 1949).

The same thought permeates the work of Niebuhr, Viereck, Herberg, and the rest, and, of course, is central to the increasingly potent propaganda of the Catholic hierarchy. Of the latter, one may cite as a typical example Professor Waldemar Gurian's very recent *Bolshevism: An Introduction to Soviet Communism* (University of Notre Dame Press), where one reads that Marxism-Leninism "brings into the open" the "root principles of the modern secularized era" such as "scientism, belief in evolution, inevitable perfection." Bishop Fulton Sheen puts the matter in more homely and more directly political language, as befits his role: "How," he asks, "will he [the devil] come into this new age to win followers to his religion?" And he answers: "He will come disguised as the Great Humanitarian; he will talk peace, prosperity and plenty. . . ."*

* Quoted in F. I. Cairns, *Progress is Unorthodox* (Boston, 1950), p. 131.

These so-mystical intellectuals, these purveyors of the meaninglessness of life, can become exceedingly mundane and specific and meaningful in terms of program. Mr. Viereck, in his elevated concern for the *Shame and Glory of the Intellectuals,* dedicates his book to Winston Churchill, and declares himself a partisan of Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Imperialism (British, he adds, as a touch of refinement). It is these academicians who urged, back in 1950, not simply propaganda against the lands of Socialism, but also the creation of "an organizational base behind them" for the purpose of insurrection and easier invasion (*Partisan Review,* Sept.-Oct., 1950, p. 660), a policy whose intellectual spearhead, now in Washington with the State Department, is that erstwhile Trotskyite, James Burnham, aspirant to the post of the American Goebbels. He wants "organization, clandestine operations and all other political warfare activities" against the socialist world. He wants "a policy of offensive"—he pants for World War III now (*Containment or Liberation?* N. Y., 1953).

Democratic Freedoms and Napalm Bombs

Bourgeois-democratic freedoms are thrown overboard as napalm bombs are thrown upon Greece and Korea. There is nothing elevated in the language of *Barron's Financial Weekly* (Oct. 27, 1952): ". . . those Americans who are forever talking of the evils of empire are unconsciously, if not consciously, talking the 'anti-imperialist' lingo of Lenin and Stalin." Nor in the demand of Congressman John Beamer of Indiana that universities in his State "bar New Deal professors" since they "espouse and promulgate the cause of Socialism or Communism in various ways" (*Evansville Press,* Dec. 9, 1952). Nor in the

address of Admiral Ben Moreel, presently chairman of Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation, before the American Petroleum Institute, affirming that income taxes and inheritance taxes and "government ownership of schools, with compulsory attendance and compulsory support" were all parts of the "doctrines enunciated by Karl Marx" (A. P. dispatch, Chicago, Nov. 10, 1952). Nor in Donald Richberg's insistence that "the final insanity is the demand that there shall be no discrimination against Negroes," and that: "Equality is the objective of communism" (*The Sigma Chi Bulletin,* March, 1950).

Shall only Communists support public education and academic freedom? Shall only Communists struggle against jimcrow and oppose imperialism? Clearly, the ideologists of imperialism have, as Stalin said, abandoned bourgeois-democratic freedoms, but it remains, as he also said, for the Communist and democratic parties to rise to their defense.

The results of the assault have been appalling. John Crosby, of the N. Y. *Herald Tribune,* finds television beset by a "creeping paralysis"; Milton Moskowitz, editor of *Advertising Age,* says "radio has thrown in the towel"; Professor Henry Smyth, the physicist, reports "continued secrecy means national scientific suicide"; and Oliver C. Carmichael, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, remarks, in his 1952 Report, that the failure to convey a sense of meaning in life, the deliberate avoidance of fundamental questions, and the absence of a feeling of real values is increasingly stultifying higher education."

A Turn Has Begun

But the defense is gathering momentum; a turn has be-

gun, the need is to keep pushing, hard. "Friendly" witnesses before Un-American Committees get the publicity, but they are out-numbered ten to one by the "unfriendly" ones who preserve their honor and dignity and patriotism though they lose all else. Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., a professor at the University of Illinois, excoriates the "anti-intellectualism in the schools" and defies the witch-hunters (*The Nation,* Jan. 9, 1953). The editors of the *New Republic* warn of "The Goose Step, 1953," and assert: "The proper subject for investigation is not the universities, but the Congressional investigating committees" (Jan. 19, 1953). Professor Commager returns to the defense of freedom of inquiry and of speech in an unequivocal article and finds that: "The search for subversives results in the intimidation of the independent, the original, the imaginative, and the experimental minded. It discourages independence of thought . . ." (*The Saturday Review,* Feb. 21, 1953).

Mrs. Agnes E. Meyer, wife of the owner of the *Washington Post* and on the board of directors of the National Citizens Commission for Public Schools, brings prolonged cheers from 17,000 teachers with her address at the seventy-ninth annual convention (1953) of the American Association of School Administrators. The teachers cheer one who expresses what is in their hearts, as she denounces the "dangerous and ruthless demagogues," McCarthy, Velde, Jenner, whose tactics "make any honest American sick to his stomach" and who seek to shatter "the noble ideals" of the true patriots of the past.

Similarly, Broadus Mitchell, the distinguished Professor of Economics at Rutgers University, insists that "beliefs and associations, however stigmatized, must be given asylum." And courageously and most correctly he adds:

"Once Communists are excluded, academic freedom is progressively destroyed. After the first tear the rending of the fabric becomes easier and easier" (*The Nation,* March 14, 1953).

"The Real Heroes of the New Life"

The attack, as we have seen, is upon man himself. Positing his loathsomeness, all else logically follows: unbridled exploitation, rampant racism, tyranny, inhumanity, slaughter. With such an attack, threatening all mankind holds dear, the defenders must be as diverse as is mankind. The Communists see, as Stalin taught, that, "Confidence in the creative power of the masses . . . is the peculiar feature in the activities of Lenin." The Communists hold, as Stalin wrote: "There are no things in the world which are unknowable, but only things which are still not known, but will be disclosed and made known by the efforts of science and practice." The Communists, as Stalin said in his last speech, have been and always will be *"in the struggle for the radiant future for the peoples."*

But this is not and cannot be the monopoly of the Communists. The radiant future beckons *all* and will be won by the organized, united struggles of *all* who reject the vista of being ground like fish-meal for soil food.

Lincoln said, when another obsolete class threatened elementary freedoms: "It is now no child's play to save the principles of Jefferson from total overthrow." No child's play, rather very hard work, with and among the masses, "those who," wrote Stalin, "create all the good things of life, who feed and clothe the whole world . . . the real heroes and the creators of the new life."

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